The Lost Royal Claim

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The Lost Royal Claim

by slashyrogue

Summary

Hannibal Lecter has been sitting in the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane for months when someone comes to see him. He says his name is William Graham IV, newly crowned king of Newcliff and he’s come to take Hannibal home with him.

Will Graham has spent the last few years attempting to gain entrance into the US in order to save his husband from life in an institution. He met and wed Hannibal when they were young, though Hannibal has no memory of it he’s all that Will has thought of since he was a boy.

Why has Hannibal forgotten him? And when he does remember, will he still wish to be Will's husband?

THIS STORY HAS BEEN REWRITTEN AND NEW TAGS ADDED

Notes

This is my gift story to myself. Once both my other big two are finished, this is the next up to be written. I have so many plans for it.

Chapter 1

The air in the room was tense.

“How long has it been?”

His bodyguard looked at the clock. “Fifteen…no…sixteen minutes, Your Highness.”

He sighed.

“One would think it would be a priority to see me.”

“Highness…”

The man who came walking into the office was dressed poorly - his suit was a year out of season, mismatched, and did nothing for him as far as the style was concerned - and obviously flustered when he sat down.

“Hello, Mr. Graham, I…”

“King William Graham IV of Newcliff,” Will snapped, eyeing him coldly, “I refuse to be called anything less after the treatment I’ve endured since my arrival.”

“I apologize for the wait.”

“As you should,” he growled, “But that is not my biggest concern. He pushed the papers in front of Dr. Chilton, “I am here to secure the release of one of your prisoners.”

Dr. Chilton took the papers, not looking at them, and shared one of the most rehearsed smiles Will had ever seen.

And he had seen many, many of such fakery over the years.

“We prefer to think of them as patients, not prisoners, M…King William,” he said, looking sour as he looked down, “We…” his eyes widened.

“As you can see I have all the necessary paperwork,” Will said, watching the name of the man he was here to take dawn on Dr. Chilton, “Hannibal Lecter is my husband, and he will be coming with me today or I will get the authorities.”

Dr. Chilton was pale as he looked up. “That’s…that’s impossible. I am not entirely clear how your supposed connection to Dr. Lecter would be able to secure his release? The man killed people and ate them. You are aware of that, yes?”

He smiled.

“Dr. Chilton, I am fully aware of everything my husband has done and as I have diplomatic immunity in this country that would also be my husband’s to share. His continued jailing is

enough to cause an international incident. Do you wish to cause an incident, Doctor?"

Frederick sputtered, "Well I…I'm sure…I have to look into this but I…"

Will stood, his guards behind him moving as he did. "While you look at the evidence to my claims I will be going to visit my husband in his cell, if you would excuse me."

"You can't just—"

He walked out of the office door and slammed it behind him, letting out a breath when he was free of that horrid man's idiocy.

The moment he'd been looking forward to since he was ten years old was about to happen and he could feel his hands shaking in anticipation.

He was going to see Hannibal again.

Will let out another breath, nodding once to Francis at his right and Tobias at his left as they walked towards one of the orderlies. "Tell me where they keep Hannibal Lecter."

The man looked around, frowning, "I'm not sure…"

Will smiled sweetly, softening his gaze and asking again, "I will not ask you twice."

The orderly nodded and started to walk towards the section where it seemed no one went, though he stopped and whispered to what looked like a guard before a set of wooden doors. The guard took out his walkie talkie and then unlocked the door, pushing it open.

Will took another huge breath and walked inside, feeling his two guards at his back as he entered.

They had Hannibal in style, he was happy to see that. His husband had a threadbare existence but he was comfortable right down to his clothing, Will could see no agitation in him as he got closer.

Hannibal was sitting at a desk drawing, not looking up as he said, "Is it that time already, Denise? I am ever so excited to see what Frederick has for me to eat this evening."

"What have they been feeding you?" Will asked, making him look up in surprise.

Will didn't move, taking in the man from the boy he knew and loved. He hadn't changed much, not really, still those seem beautiful eyes that seemed to see right through Will with a single gaze.

"Who are you? A reporter? I did not authorize any interviews."

"I am King William Graham IV of Newcliff, a small country outside of…"

Hannibal smirked.

“I know where Newcliff is, and there are no kings there that I know of.”

Will frowned. “You do not remember, but you were going to be one as well. Your family…”

Hannibal stood up, walking towards his bookshelf and giving Will his back. “My family is dead. There is nothing else to discuss, Mister Graham. I’d like you to leave.”

He ran toward the clear cell window, putting his hands over it, and blinked back tears.

“You just don’t remember,” he said, his voice shaking, "If you’d just…”

Hannibal did not turn to look at him.

“Whatever game this is, I have no desire to play.”

Will’s chest ached as he felt a tear fall down his cheek.

“You used to love games,” he said, laughing through his tears, “You…you used to love… many things I think you’ve forgotten.”

Hannibal turned, his eyes angry as he hissed, “What is your business here?”

Will sniffled, hand still on the clear window between them.

“I am here to take you home with me.”

He watched Hannibal’s head tilt just slightly. “You *are* aware of why I am incarcerated? There is very little chance I will *ever* step foot outside these walls, let alone be escorted by a stranger.”

Will smiled. “We’re not strangers, Hannibal,” he said, trying to calm himself, “You…you are my husband.”

Hannibal blinked at him. “Husband?”

“Yes, we’ve been married for a very long…”

“I do not seem to recall you at all, William,” Hannibal said, “I would imagine our marriage would have held some significance in my memory if it existed.”

“You don’t remember, that’s all, but we were married when I was ten years old and you were fourteen. We…”

“There is very little I do not remember, Your Highness,” Hannibal said, his voice filled with obvious confusion, “But…I also do not understand why you would come here and take a known serial killer as your consort. You *do* know me? Tell me, what have I done to deserve such devotion and how…how will you make it happen?”

Will sighed. “First, do not call me Your Highness,” he said, frowning, “I am more than that to you even if you don’t remember, and as to your question…you are the husband of a diplomat

and with that you share my diplomatic immunity. They cannot keep you here without risking an international incident."

Hannibal smiled.

"You are a man of much importance then, William, I…I am impressed."

Will blushed. "Will," he said, "Please…call me Will."

Hannibal walked up to him and put his hand over Will's.

"What took you so long, *Will* ? I have been here for over a year."

"I spent a year getting the paperwork together," he said, voice shaking, "I…I argued to so many people, used all of my influence, and now…here I am."

Hannibal's smile faded. "Coming to free a man who does not know or remember you. I find that hard to believe."

Will let out a long breath.

"Mischa used to love flowers," he said, the name making him close his eyes, "And…she had a kitten named Gele."

"How do you…you do you know such a thing. I've never…"

He opened his eyes again and saw such emotion in Hannibal's gaze.

Will shook his head as more tears came. "I know everything, I…I know *you* ."

Hannibal paled, tears filling his eyes. "I believe you."

He turned to the guard who'd followed them inside and now stood at the door keeping his husband from him. "Open the doors and let me inside."

"No, there is no fucking way that…"

Will glared at him. "Do I need to ask you twice? I could have your neck snapped so fast and *no one* could question it. Do *not* test me."

The guard glared back at him and sighed before he took out his walkie talkie and said something he barely understood. Two more guards came in from a door on the other side of Hannibal's cell, wheeling in a device his husband seemed familiar with and Will watched in horror as they strapped him into a straight jacket and covered his mouth. Every fiber in Will wanted to lunge at these monsters that seemed to treat Hannibal like an animal.

But he didn't argue.

They finished fast and eyed him oddly as half left while is own guard held the door for him. Will walked inside, staring around the room and resisting the urge to look at the drawings he

saw in a pile on the desk.

“You are aware that if they allow me to leave I will kill you and your guards as soon as we are outside these walls.”

Will smiled as he walked up to Hannibal. “You speak as if I could not do the same.”

Hannibal’s eyes danced as he looked at Will. “You are a multi-faceted man, aren’t you, Will?”

He blushed. “I have many facets to me, Hannibal. Wouldn’t you like to be able to view them all?”

“Perhaps.”

Will smiled and said, not looking away, “Leave us.”

“But…” one of the guards said before Francis side armed him, pulling him out of the room and leaving them alone.

“Now what will you do with me?” Hannibal asked.

Will did the only thing he could think of and began to free him. He slowly unstrapped his chest, lovingly touching each exposed part of his clothing as he undid each strap. He was not at all surprised when the moment he finished Hannibal lunged, grabbing at his throat to throw him up against the glass.

“Stand…down…” Will choked, stopping his guards who were ready to strike and looked at Hannibal with a smile, “I trust you, you trust me. Remember?”

“I don’t know you, Will,” Hannibal said, his voice barely above a whisper, “How do I know I *can* trust you?”

“Meile,” Will repeated, “M…”

Hannibal’s eyes widened as he suddenly loosened his grip of Will who coughed but never looked away from the look in Hannibal’s eyes. “Mazasis.”

Will could not help the tears that fell down his face. “Yes,” he whispered hoarsely, nodding, “Yes, yes, do you…do you remember?”

Hannibal shook his head, his grip barely there now. “I do not but I…I feel as if the memories are clawing to get out of me.”

The sudden slamming open of his cell door startled Will and several men came in to rip Hannibal away from him. He shouted as he watched them throw his husband to the floor, and was dragged out as he yelled after them.

“I demand to speak to Dr. Chilton! Give me Chilton! Do not hurt him! I will drag your entrails out from your eyeballs you…!”

They ignored him, pulling him out and his own guards got them off of Will as he watched angrily while they began strapping Hannibal in again and tasing him.

Will banged on the glass and put his hand there as he yelled. “You are going home with me, Hannibal! I will set you free! I promise you!”

He watched Hannibal try to lift his head and smile, barely able to move before they tased him unconscious and Will stomped out of the room yelling.

“Chilton! I demand to see Chilton!”

“King Graham!” Dr. Chilton yelled, making Will turn to glare at him stomping toward him, “Get a hold of yourself, this is unacceptable, I…I believe there has been some mistake.”

A man trailed behind him holding a piece of paper and glared at Will whose lip curled the moment they were close. ““There is no mistake here, the only mistake is that my husband has been wrongfully incarcerated, and I will secure his release even if it means you will no longer have a job or this entire building is shut down by this time tomorrow.”

“Hannibal Lecter is a convicted murderer and letting him out in the world would be reckless and dangerous, you have no idea what you are about to do Mister Graham,” the stranger at Chilton’s side said, making Will smile thinly.

“I know exactly what it is I’m doing, Sir, and…I don’t believe we’ve met?”

“Jack Crawford, I…”

Will bared his teeth at the name, rushing toward Crawford in his anger and making the man spring back in surprise.

“You are the man who put Hannibal here! I should demand you be deported to my country and hanged for doing this!”

“Does your country treat murders like heroes?”

Will smiled.

“My country does exactly what I tell it to, Mister Crawford,” he said, turning to look at Chilton then back to Jack, “I’ve had enough of this. Do either of you refute my claims?”

Jack Crawford said nothing and Chilton just shook his head.

“It all seems in order, Your Majesty,” Chilton sighed, holding out the papers Jack had in hand, “Hannibal Lecter is free in your custody as of now.”

Will smiled. “Thank you.”

He left them and went back to where Hannibal was held, his anger still boiling under his skin as he thought of how much he wanted to tear into the men around him. Though two murderers would have a lot more trouble leaving the United States than one.

He waited as they opened the door to Hannibal's cell and when Will walked inside he knelt at his bedside, touching Hannibal's face as he slept. He put his hand to where they'd tased his neck, tears stinging his eyes as he caressed the marks.

"They hurt him."

His words would have meant nothing to anyone who heard them but to his guards who both said nothing they knew his words to be orders. The guards would suffer for daring to touch what was his.

Tobias came to lift Hannibal and Will hissed at him, blocking his path. "DO NOT TOUCH HIM! *No one* touches him but me."

He attempted to lift Hannibal in his arms, struggling slightly but able to get him up with one arm as they walked to a waiting wheelchair. He touched his face again.

"You're going home, Meile."

He knew that perhaps Hannibal couldn't hear him, but as he wheeled him out of the cell, he hoped he could.

Their time apart was at an end, and this was only the beginning.

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> I've been sitting on this for at least a month, and I was going to wait till I had the others finished before starting to post what I'd written so far but I've been so lax in updating others I feel so awful.

Hannibal woke up and felt someone at his side, a warmth he hadn't felt in years, and reached out to touch the King who he could not remember.

"Touch him and I'll cut off your arm."

Hannibal looked up at the guard, whose glare turned to a snarl when he caressed Will's face.

"If you think that is enough for me to fear touching my own husband, you know nothing of me."

Will stirred, eyes opening as he smiled. "You're awake."

"As are you, Mazasis, I…I apologize but I still cannot remember you."

Will's cheeks reddened and Hannibal longed to run his hand over his skin again so he did just that, making Will shiver.

"You do not have to remember for me to want you with me," Will confessed, touching the hand on his cheek.

Hannibal said, "I will remember, Will, I promise you I….I will remember."

Will smiled and entwined their fingers on his cheek till he turned to glare at the guard who'd threatened Hannibal.

The guard whose expression was entirely different when he looked at Will, warm and welcoming, and Hannibal almost growled thinking perhaps his anger was not just for protection of his King. How much did Will's men care for him?

"Tobias, did I hear you threatening my husband as I slept?"

Hannibal smiled as the guard, apparently named Tobias, suddenly looked frightened. "No Your Highness, I did nothing of the sort I…"

"He did," came a voice from behind them and Hannibal immediately knew which guard he would allow to live, "Though your husband did not rise to the threat. You would have been

proud, Your Highness."

Will smiled at Hannibal, looking besotted and proud. "I know nothing would stop Hannibal from doing what he wanted to do, consequences be damned."

Hannibal could almost feel Tobias's eyes on him but he only stared at Will in surprise.

"You speak as if you approve of such a response. Could I have retaliated to your guard and you'd still look at me with such a smile?"

Will nodded, smiling still. "You do not know what it was like when…when I lost you. It's been a long time since someone would fight for me, Meile. It's comforting to know you would win."

Hannibal just stared at him, taking in Will as completely as he could before he spoke.

"Tell them to leave."

Will's smile faded for a moment but he didn't look away. "They have to follow your orders too, you are my consort."

"Tell that to Tobias."

Will's eyes narrowed as he looked at Tobias. "Tobias knows better than to even think of second guessing my decisions, I'm not a child anymore."

Hannibal smiled. "Leave. Both of you."

He watched Tobias hesitate before he moved, heading for the door of the hotel room they were in and before the second guard left he asked, "Your name?"

"Francis, Your Highness," Francis said, bowing his head.

"Thank you, Francis," Hannibal said, "For your loyalty."

Francis bowed again before he left, and Hannibal waited until they were alone to move. He stood up, stretching and wincing at the soreness in his back and neck. Will stood up and stepped closer to him, his hand out to touch though he hesitated even as his eyes filled with tears.

"I wanted to kill them for doing that to you."

Hannibal smiled at him, and walked to the mini fridge to grab a bottle of water taking a long sip before he wiped his mouth and Will sat at the table by the bed.

"It will be much harder for two murderers to leave the country than one, no matter how much diplomatic immunity they have."

Will's smile was almost trembling as Hannibal sat at the table across from him.

“We are still a lot alike,” Will said softly, his hand coming to rest on his cheek as he looked at Hannibal with that same devoted gaze, “I’d hoped, I…I dreamed this and yet the real event pales in comparison to any dreams I’ve had of it over the years we’ve been apart.”

Hannibal frowned. “I may not live up to the dream you’ve had of me, Mazasis,” he said, the endearment flowing from his tongue with ease, “I may disappoint you.”

“Never.”

He looked at Will. “You know what I’ve done,” he said, “What I *am* .”

“Yes,” Will said, “You’ve killed many, and you…you may kill again. That does not stop me from….does not…it changes nothing.”

“Have you killed someone before, Will?”

Will stood up suddenly, and looked around the room as if he could find the answers to Hannibal’s question anywhere but in his own mind. “What does it matter?”

Hannibal stood and walked over to him, turning Will’s cheek to make him look into his eyes.

“You know nothing of me except what you have imagined. I am not the loving husband you crave, and to think I am would be unwise on your part.”

Will smiled. “I know you, Meile, and you knew me when no one else did. You helped me see how beautiful it was to unleash the desires inside of you.”

Hannibal frowned. “When you were ten years old I took you sexually?”

Will laughed, throwing back his head and shaking his head. “No, no. You…we killed someone together,” he confessed, much to Hannibal’s surprise, “You don’t remember because you were angry with me. I broke a promise to you, and I’ve regretted it every day since we last saw each other.”

Hannibal tried to remember things from before the house in the woods with his parents and Mischa but it was like a brick wall.

“If I do not remember you there has to be a very monumental reason, I remember everything that is important to me. It seems the way you speak you were once one of those things. What did you do to me, Mazasis?”

Will looked away, saying nothing, and took out his phone and put it to his ear.

“What time will the plane be ready? Okay. Yes. As soon as you can. Thank you, Francis.”

He hung up and looked at Hannibal, who had yet to look away from him.

“We’ll be leaving soon. Unless you still plan on killing me.”

“Not at this moment, no,” Hannibal said, “You did not respond to my question.”

Will shook his head. “We will not speak of it here, it’s…I will explain myself to you in time.”

“I suppose if that’s all the answer I will get for now, I’ll have to accept it.”

“Thank you,” Will said, his voice shaking slightly, “I bought you some clothes, they’re in the closet there. I’ll leave you to change.”

He practically ran to the door, and Hannibal resisted the urge to stop him but thought better of it. This entire situation was so strange, but if he wanted his freedom he was going to take advantage even if he decided to kill Will in the future.

Hannibal went to shower, years of dirt and grime sliding off and going down the drain. He fixed his hair perfectly, and walked to the closet entirely naked where to his delight he saw a very well tailored suit. It was gray, pin striped, and when he finished dressing it was almost entirely to his measurements. Hannibal looked at himself once again and stepped out into the next room in time to see Will gaze at him with desire.

“I didn’t think you could look better than before, but I was wrong,” Will said softly, making Hannibal look down at himself.

“I appreciate the suit, it’s very well tailored,” Hannibal said in response, smirking, “You had my measurements.”

Will blushed, “I…I learned as much about you as I could while we were apart.”

Hannibal looked amused, but passed Will by running a hand over his arm, “They were an inch short on my left inseam.”

Tobias scoffed, and Will laughed, shaking his head.

“I’ll update that then.”

They spent the morning eating room service, though Will had Francis and Tobias taste their food before they ate it much to Hannibal’s surprise.

“There are those who would see me dead, I’m not exactly well liked here in the US, taking a serial killer from prison.”

Hannibal took a bite of his eggs, savoring the taste. “I would imagine I’m not universally admired either, though I did not think for a second of poison. Has that been a problem for you before?”

Will swallowed, nodding once. “I’m not exactly well liked among my own people either.”

Hannibal frowned. “Why?”

“That’s none of your business,” Tobias growled, making Will’s head snap around.

“He is my husband, he is allowed to know all about my past.”

“This outsider does not…”

“ENOUGH!” Will yelled, grabbing a knife and throwing it, surprising Hannibal when it hit Tobias in the shoulder.

The guard winced, not moving as Will stood and walked over to him. He put a hand on the blade and twisted it in, “If you are going to continue this shit, Tobias, you’re not going to be going home at all. Is that clear?”

Tobias seemed at odds, Hannibal could see the murderous glint in his gaze and it irked him immensely to see it directed at Will instead of him. He reached for his own knife on the table, itching to shove his into the guard’s shoulder alongside his supposed husband’s.

Will pulled the knife out and walked back to him, setting it down onto the table before he sighed, smiling at Hannibal warmly. “I apologize for that interruption.”

Hannibal licked his lips, staring at the blood on Will’s knife and seeing some of it got onto his hand.

“Your hand is dirty, Mazasis, may I?”

Will looked down, holding out his hand for Hannibal who took it and licked the blood off, never taking his eyes off of Will’s reaction. The dilating of his pupils and the small gasp made him more aroused than he could ever remember being before.

“You are skilled,” he praised, turning Will’s palm over and kissing the middle of it.

Will laughed shakily, his hand trembling in Hannibal’s grip. “I have to be, there are a lot of people who I need to protect myself from.”

Hannibal ran his fingers over Will’s palm before bringing their hands together, interlocking their fingers and kissing the top of Will’s own. “Tell me.”

Will was shaking more now, his whispered, “Not here,” making Hannibal withdraw and nod once before returning to their meal.

After they finished and their empty plates were rolled away by Francis. Tobias seemed to be missing now and Hannibal hoped he would be until they departed.

He squeezed Will’s hand and leaned in to whisper to him. “Can we have that discussion now as long as it’s in private?”

Will sighed.

“I think waiting until we leave might be a better idea, I don’t think my words will give you any sort of pleasure and…I don’t want you to be upset for the duration of the trip. I’ll just…I think it best if I take my leave.”

He watched Will attempt to get up from the table but grabbed his arm making Francis tense at one look he made the guard relax.

Hannibal reached up to touch his cheek.

“I deserve to know everything now before I am trapped in an airplane with you and your people. Do I not?”

Will sighed, nodding once and letting go of him to head into the other room.

Hannibal turned to Francis before he went as well. “Do not follow,” he said softly, not yet leaving.

Francis nodded once before Hannibal turned to follow Will. He shut the door behind him and sat in the chair he’d been in earlier while Will sat on the bed with his back to him.

“Why would your people want you dead?”

Will sighed.

“I left the man who my parents would have had me marry after attempting to dissolve our marriage. Our wedding was anticipated, he is very well known and admired.”

Hannibal felt anger rising up in him.

“Your parents did not approve of me, though according to you they officiated our marriage alongside my own parents?”

Will looked back at him and his eyes were full of tears. “My parents are dead, Hannibal, so it does not very well matter their opinion anymore does it?”

Hannibal frowned. “I apologize.”

“It is not…it doesn’t matter. The point is, my people were excited for me to marry and he was the perfect candidate on paper. No one knew the man underneath. They did not know the demon my parents were saddling me with. I was lucky to get away from him, lucky to…,” Will’s sudden tears had made Hanniibal’s chest ache, and he rushed from the bed to fall to his knees in front of him, “I’ve kept myself pure for you, Meile. I swear, I didn’t let him inside me. I swear to god, Hannibal, I didn’t!”

Hannibal’s lip curled as he wiped the tears from Will’s face.

“What did he do to you?”

“He…I….he liked to…” Will looked down and Hannibal caught where his eyes were, shaking with rage.

“Stand for me, Mazasis,” he ordered, and Will stood, “May I?”

Will nodded, tears falling down his cheeks as Hannibal unbuttoned his shirt slowly and exposed Will’s stomach.

There were marks all over his torso, making Hannibal growl. They were mostly shallow, quick healing, though he could see some that had healed wrong. He ran his hands over Will's skin and wanted to bite, make his own marks in their place.

"I will kill this man."

"He'll hurt you. I can't…I'm stronger now. I can protect you. I…"

Hannibal looked up at him. "There is no way I will not get my hands on this man. You cannot stop me. Tell me his name."

"Mason Verger," Will whispered, trembling as Hannibal leaned in and kissed his stomach.

"You say that you are mine, Will. No one marks what is mine but me," he whispered, licking his skin as Will moaned, "And those who do will suffer the consequences."

"Hannibal, please," Will sighed, leaning into his tongue.

Hannibal looked up at him again, his cock already growing hard, and ran his fingers over Will's skin.

"How long do we have?"

Will opened his mouth to speak when there was a knock at the door.

He sighed. "Not long enough."

Hannibal began redoing his buttons, finishing quickly before he stood. He stared at Will, his gaze lingering as he caressed his cheek. "Are those the only marks?"

Will looked down again as he shook his head.

Hannibal lifted his chin. "You will show me each and every one, so I can make my own."

Will leaned in, his lips parted for a kiss, and he begged, "Please."

"Not yet."

He groaned and Hannibal smiled, walking to the door.

"We have plenty of time for that later, Will," he said, turning to look back at him, "I believe we have a plane to catch?"

Will glared at him. "I should've known you'd be a tease, you always were," he muttered, walking past Hannibal to throw open the door.

Tobias stood on the other side in fresh clothes, glaring at them both. "Sire…"

Will spat, "The plane is ready, I take it?"

"Yes."

“Then I guess it’s time to go,” Will said, looking at Tobias and then at Francis who seemed to appear out of nowhere, “How bad is it out there?”

“Bad,” Francis said, “The crowd is angry, I would suggest going a different way than the front door.”

Will frowned. “I won’t hide. I’m not ashamed of Hannibal.”

Hannibal took Will’s hand.

“Do not bring yourself to harm for me, Mazasis. We will take Francis’s idea to heart. It would be safer for us all.”

Will nodded once and they left flanked on both sides as they walked down the hall to the service entrance. Hannibal entered first and Will second as close as he could to his husband as the doors closed.

The cool air hit as they got outside, and as they made their way to the car Hannibal knew the guards were at their sides but couldn’t help but keep his eyes on Will, keeping him close. He trusted no one with Will’s safety but himself, guards or not.

The thought that he was territorial over Will so quickly was startling, though he took it more as a possessive view of an item he considered his.

Emotional connection was not in the equation.

They were halfway to the car when suddenly out of nowhere a slew of reporters appeared taking photos and shouting questions that Hannibal ignored, getting closer to Will and throwing an arm over the other man’s shoulder.

“I’m used to it,” Will whispered, though he grabbed back with equal force.

They got inside the car, Will first flanked by Francis while Tobias drove.

“You are unharmed?” Hannibal asked Will, looking him over with a frown.

Will smiled. “I’m fine. It can be worse in my country, like I said they are not very happy with me there. Here I think they just wanted to see you.”

Hannibal put his hand on Will’s shoulder. “I am used to the scrutiny, Mazasis. I can manage, don’t worry.”

Will sighed, staring at him with a sad smile. “I know. You always do.”

Will fell into silence after that, staring out of the window while Hannibal attempted to open whatever block his mind had against Will’s presence.

The mental block must have been quite strong for all he received in return was a black void.

He was almost angry at his own mental defenses.

They pulled up to the airstrip and Will turned to Hannibal, looking quite forlorn.

"Part of me knows you're going with us because you want to be free and I…even if you don't stay with me I'll be happy to have gotten you out of there."

Hannibal swallowed, licking his lips. "I am going with you for a variety of reasons but things have somewhat changed over the past few hours, Mazasis. I may not stay forever but I do want to know you."

Will smiled, tears in his eyes.

"I know that's mostly because you hate not knowing things about yourself but thank you for trying to make it about me. I may not have seen you in over twenty years but I know that much."

Hannibal unbuckled his belt and leaned over, his face very close to Will's as he spoke. "I want to know you, Will. Very much."

Will swallowed and Hannibal kissed his cheek, lingering there before a cleared throat interrupted them. Hannibal glared at Tobias who was glaring back just as hard.

"The pilot is waiting, sire."

Will glared at him. "I am paying the man, he can wait."

Tobias got out of the car and slammed the car door as Will whispered to Hannibal softly. "I missed you."

Hannibal touched his cheek again and smiled. "I do not remember you, Mazasis, but I am quite certain I have missed you as well."

Will's shy smile when they parted was worth the confession, and they held hands walking to the very large jet. Hannibal was impressed the moment they stepped inside and squeezed Will's hand as they sat down beside each other.

"This is very elegantly decorated, I would not have thought you'd prefer this type of luxury."

He took in the gold adorned walls and plush furnishings, wondering just what aspects of Will he had yet to decipher.

Will sighed.

"My father preferred this kind of thing, actually. I really don't like being this showy unless I need to be. I don't like…all *this* ."

Hannibal smiled, running his thumb over the top of Will's hand.

"Unless it can free you a forgotten husband?" he teased.

Will frowned, squeezing his hand.

“I NEVER forgot you. Not for one day, not one second.”

He stared into Hannibal’s eyes so intensely, so earnestly, that Hannibal could not help but kiss him. Will sighed into it, trembling still even as he pulled away.

“I am sorry that I have.”

Will smiled at him sadly.

“It’s okay. I…I almost dread it, you know? When you remember. I might not want to have you remember at all.”

Will let go of his hand, turning away as they both sat down buckling their safety belts.

“There is something you are not telling me.”

Will said nothing.

“Your contradictory attitude over my memory loss speaks for you. I despise liars, even if I hid my true nature and deceived it is quite different when it is directed at me.”

Will turned back to look at him, eyes filled with tears. “I know.”

Hannibal reached for Will only to have him unbuckle his safety belt and walk across the plane where Tobias and Francis were sitting. He sat between them and Hannibal bared his teeth at Tobias who grinned smugly his way.

He closed his eyes and willed his mind to give him something, anything, from his past.

When the memory came Hannibal was startled by the sudden influx of emotion that came with it:

A young boy held onto his arms, sobbing as they were separated. Hannibal heard his name being screamed as his father pulled him away. “Hannibal, please! Please! Prasom! Prasom Meile! Prasom!”

He climbed into his parents’ car and stared out at the boy feeling like his heart was breaking. They would be together again when Will was ready to take over as King, until then he would not sever ties with him, not let him go through the world alone even if he could no longer be beside him.

He repeated the promise to himself over and over as he whispered, “Mazasis,” feeling a physical ache as the car pulled him further and further away.

Hannibal opened his eyes, feeling wetness on his face as he looked to Will who was doing everything in his power not to look his way.

Will needed him; he knew that now. The secret he was keeping from him would have to wait until he was sure Will was safe.

Even from his wrath.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

> for bjtremike who inspired me to write more of this. I really appreciate your patience and I hope you like what's coming.

Will could not stop looking at Hannibal, not even when he desperately wanted not to, and as the hours went by he missed him close.

But feared what he may confess the longer they were together.

He sighed, rubbed his eyes, and looked out the window.

“Sire? May I speak?”

Will glared at Tobias. “That depends on what you wish to say.”

Tobias frowned, not meeting his eyes though even Will could see the anger he held. “I think this is a mistake.”

“It’s none of your business what mistakes I make, Tobias. You’re paid to be here, paid to protect me, and not second guess my decisions,” Will snapped back, his lip curling.

Tobias shook his head. “I understand that, but I believe taking this monster as your consort will bring you nothing but pain.”

Will smiled.

“Why?”

He blinked. “Why?”

“Why do you think taking Hannibal home with me will bring nothing but pain? Because he is a killer? Because of our shared past? Why?”

Tobias frowned. “You seem to have trusted him so quickly, Majesty, this monster, and I only…”

Will looked at Francis. “Francis, choke him.”

Francis grabbed hold of Tobias’s neck, making him cough, and he looked at Will with wide eyes.

Will undid his seatbelt and stood walking over to look down into Tobias’s eyes.

“I would be careful, Tobias, telling me I have put trust in the wrong person. Because I trusted you once, and this trip has done nothing but make me question having you as part of my close guard at all,” he looked at Francis and nodded, then smiled as Tobias coughed, “You will be lucky if you make it home in one piece. He may be a monster, Tobias, but he’s MY monster. We’re conjoined, and no one will separate us again, not if I can help it.”

Tobias looked down, saying nothing, and Will turned to see Hannibal had gotten out of his seat. His appreciative gaze made Will blush.

“I did not know you were listening.”

“Hard to avoid,” Hannibal said, smiling, “Given the loudness of the conversation and the… visual stimuli.”

Will walked over to him. “I would ask if you’d like to join me in the bedroom.”

Hannibal raised his eyebrow and Will blushed harder. “Not…I meant…to sleep off some of these long hours. There will be plenty.”

He shivered when Hannibal took his hand and kissed it softly.

“I would,” he said, “Thank you.”

Will could not help but feel nervous as they headed to the back together, knowing they would be alone again. He walked in first, and felt Hannibal at his back as he heard the door close.

“Hannibal, I…”

He turned Will around, and touched his cheek. “Are you well?”

Will frowned. “I…yes.”

“Tobias upset you,” Hannibal said, sitting them both down, “I was merely…worried he’d said something terrible.”

Will blushed. “He…he questioned my decision to take you home with me, and…called you a monster.”

Hannibal smiled. “Did he?”

“I told him you might be a monster, but…you’re MY monster.”

He sighed, leaning in and pressing their foreheads together as Will felt tears in his eyes. A sudden memory of doing this, so long ago, made his lip quiver and his chest ache.

“Meile…”

“What makes you cry, Mazasis?”

Tears blurred his vision. “I missed you so much,” he said, “I…I felt like half a person for so very long and we hardly spent much time together at all but…I knew I loved you then as I know I love you now.”

“Will…”

He closed his eyes. “I don’t expect you to feel the same, perhaps not ever if your memory never returns but…I cannot imagine a world where I don’t love you with every part of me.”

Hannibal let out a long breath.

“I would ask,” Hannibal said, his voice shaking, “You mentioned other scars that *he* gave you. May I see them?”

Will pulled away sharply, wiping his cheeks as he looked down. “I’m not sure I…I’m comfortable enough to…do that yet.”

Hannibal put an arm around his back, just above his waist. “Are they below your waistline?”

He closed his eyes. “Yes.”

Hannibal’s angry snarl made him want to flee, but Hannibal held him still.

“How could they let you be alone with such a monster?”

Will looked at him. “He was to be my husband,” Will said, shaking his head, “And…they wanted what he promised them. Money for the military, connections for diplomacy, and…he even offered his sister to carry our children.”

Hannibal scoffed. “As if you or I could not find a surrogate?”

“Not of our own blood,” Will sighed as he laid his head on Hannibal’s shoulder, “My parents they…they very much wanted the line to continue even if I was inclined to men.”

Hannibal ran fingers through his hair and Will could not help the tears that fell down his cheeks. He still knew just how to calm him, after so much time apart, and Will wanted to drown in the comfort of his touch forever.

“I take back my condolences,” Hannibal said, “Your parents are better off dead.”

Will let out a long breath, shaking with the words he wanted to confess.

Hannibal was the only one who would praise him, but was he ready to tell him such a secret?

“Will?”

“I…I killed my parents.”

Hannibal froze, tense at his side, but made no move to push him away.

“And no one knows this?”

Will couldn't see through his tears as he shook his head. "No."

"The guards?"

"I climbed out onto my balcony," he said, letting out a sob, and to theirs connected to my own. They…they like their privacy and they…they did not see me coming."

Hannibal put his hand on Will's cheek as he gazed down at him in wonder.

"How did you do it?"

"With my hands," Will said, nearly laughing as he confessed, "I…I smothered her, so I did not have to worry and I…I choked him. I choked and choked and…"

Hannibal kissed him then, more deeply than ever before, and Will clutched him as he laid him down onto the bed. He wanted him, more than he'd ever wanted anything, and as they tasted each other he started to sob. He pulled back, shaking as Hannibal breathed in, and he held him as he cried.

"You did what you had to do," he said, "You…I'm very proud of you, Mazasis. You may not have been here now if you hadn't taken control."

He pulled back with a whimper. "You only are happy because I killed, not…"

Hannibal put a finger to his lips as he frowned.

"That monster would have tortured you for your entire marriage, Will," he said, the anger in his face growing worse, "Or perhaps even killed you. You ended their lives to save your own and…mine. I…I only wish I was there to see the horror in their eyes."

Will sniffled, smiling, and Hannibal took the handkerchief from his breast pocket to wipe his cheeks.

"I was able to break the treaty after they were found," he whispered, his voice barely above a whisper, "And the…ways they'd kept me from you were dissolved. I only wish I hadn't waited so long."

Hannibal kissed his cheek. "You did what you had to, Mazasis."

Will wrapped his arms around him and breathed in his scent as Hannibal had done. He didn't smell the same, and yet there were hints of the child he'd been that Will could never forget.

"I'm just happy I have you now."

"As am I."

They lay together after Will's confession, just relaxing for the first time since this all began, and before long they fell asleep. Will woke to a voice calling his name, and he looked up to see Francis looking concerned.

“What is it?”

“Majesty, I…”

“What is it, Francis?” he asked, whispering as he tried to get up but wake Hannibal, “We’re trying to rest.”

“There’s a problem,” Francis said, frowning as Will stood up to come to him, “A protest. The airport wants to discreetly have us land in a private strip to keep people from…”

“No,” Will said, crossing his arms.

“But, Your Highness, it’s much safer if…”

"I SAID NO!"

"Is there a problem?" Hannibal asked, his voice sounding tired.

Will blushed. “I apologize for waking you.”

“No need,” he said, sitting up, “What’s happened?”

"There is a protest in the airport, about your arrival. The airport security wants to secret us away like a dirty fucking secret and I said no."

"I have no problem with it, this should have been something you anticipated Will."

Will blushed. "I didn't...I never thought they'd be this upset."

Hannibal smiled. "Their King taking a cannibalistic serial murderer as a consort is going to upset some people."

Francis smiled. “Majesty, it’s your choice. I will await your instruction.”

He bowed, leaving them, and Hannibal stood smoothing out his suit as Will paced.

“Will, I don’t see the problem with this.”

Will sighed. “I wanted to celebrate your arrival,” he said, “I…I know this isn’t your home but…it was once. I wanted so much more for this day.”

Hannibal put his hands on Will’s shoulders and sighed.

“Perhaps…"I have a solution, possibly to quiet their unrest."

"I will let you lead me out of the airport, and we will be extremely affectionate while doing so."

Will smiled. “And this would accomplish…?”

“It would show your people that you’re well-loved and taken care of, that I am not some demon whose evilness has forced you into a relationship you do not wish for. I believe the story of our childhood love would also be very helpful in changing this image.”

Will looked away, shaking his head. “As you still haven’t regained all your memories, I’d prefer to keep most of that private, Meile.”

“What you should do and what you prefer to do are two completely different things,” Hannibal murmured, turning Will’s cheek so their eyes met once more, “You want my council on the matter and I’ve given it.”

Will’s cheeks reddened as he nodded. “Alright,” he whispered, “We’ll have it your way.”

Hannibal leaned in and kissed his forehead, making Will gasp as he grabbed hold of his wrist.

“Will?”

He pulled back and tears filled his eyes as he looked at Hannibal, his voice shaking as he spoke. “You remembered.”

Hannibal blinked. “I….was that something I did to you before?”

Will wiped at his eyes as he nodded. “That was the last kiss you ever gave me, I...I used to remember it in my dreams….and my nightmares.”

He moved to touch Will again but Will rushed out of the bedroom, overwhelmed, and found Tobias and Francis in a heated argument that stopped the moment they saw him.

“What has he done to you?” Tobias growled, standing, “What…”

Will glared at him. “Stand down,” he growled, “He has done nothing, and you’re making a fool of yourself. I was merely overwhelmed.”

Both of his guards watched him carefully.

“Have you decided what you wish to do, Majesty?” Francis asked.

“We will not hide,” Will said, “I’ve made my choice.”

Both men nodded, and Will turned to see Hannibal had come into the room. He looked confused and upset at once, and Will wished he wasn’t so scared to tell him everything. Will walked over and took his hands in his.

“We’ll have it your way,” he said, “Affection and all.”

Hannibal smiled. “How much affection am I allowed?”

“As much as possible without being vulgar.”

Hannibal leaned in to kiss his cheek. “As you wish.”

They both sat down again, side by side, and Will didn’t say a word as they descended. He was nervous, frightened, and excited all at once. Hannibal was coming home with him, at last, and everything he’d gone through was going to be worth the pain.

Newcliff looked just as he’d left it, the vast beauty of his home bringing tears to his eyes.

“Do you remember?”

Hannibal squeezed his hand. “No, I’m sorry.”

Will hated the disappointment, but also was almost happy he didn’t.

Would Hannibal forgive him?

He didn’t know.

But he wanted him to know everything.

He heard the pilot announce their closeness and couldn’t help the trembling as the plane shook when they started to land. “Is everything all right?”

Will nodded, squeezing his hand, and Hannibal’s presence helped ease his sudden fears as they finally landed. They didn’t speak to each other when they undid their safety belts though Will reached for his hand before they headed for the airplane’s exit door.

Hannibal stayed close to Will and squeezed their hands together as they stepped out.

There were protesters, he’d known there would be, and he tensed as they walked down.

“They do not matter,” Hannibal whispered.

Only we matter, Mazasis. Only we.

He could not help his tears at the sudden memory.

Will started to relax as they kept going, and when they hit the bottom Hannibal pressed a kiss to his cheek. He heard several cameras go off and they were swarmed by other bodyguards who ushered them to the limousine that waited.

They all spoke quickly, barking orders to each other, and Will hardly paid much attention as they closed the door. He let out a long sigh.

“I think that went well,” Hannibal said, squeezing his hand again.

“You do?”

“No one attempted to assassinate me, so yes I do.”

Will laughed and laid his head on Hannibal's shoulder, and the touch to his hair was another memory that brought back feelings he knew he should stop letting rush to the surface so soon.

"It's only your first day here. Give them time," he said, leaning into his touch.

"Time is now something I have, thanks to you," Hannibal whispered, kissing his forehead again.

Will's lip quivered as he turned his head and looked into Hannibal's eyes. He looked so different and yet exactly the same. "Miele, I…"

Hannibal kissed him then, their mouths brushing, and he sighed into the kiss as Hanniba's fingers threaded through his hair with every taste.

"You are aware you're not alone?" Tobias said rudely, giving him pause.

Will turned his head to glare at him.

"You are also aware that you're paid to act as if we are?"

Will felt an odd satisfaction as Tobias's gaze looked down at his lap. "Apologies, Your Majesty."

Will sighed.

"It's alright, Mazasis. Nothing was ruined."

Will smiled at him.

"I'm just glad you're finally home."

Hannibal lifted their entwined hands up for perusal. "It doesn't feel like home."

"It will," Will insisted, "When you see the castle."

"I'm sure it will."

The drive wasn't too long, though Will couldn't call it a short one either. He watched Hannibal take in the scenery, really experiencing Newcliff, and when Will saw the castle on the horizon he pointed.

"There."

The castle, which had not felt like home in so very long, made him ache for it now.

"That…"

"Yes, that's home. Do you remember it?"

Hannibal's eyes were filled with something Will couldn't quite name. "I think I do, yes."

“You once told me coming here used to excite you, though the first time you were angry.”

He looked at Will. “I’m sure you had something to do with that. Our connection.”

Will felt tears chrome to his eyes. “Yes, I think so. I…”

Hannibal kissed him again, making Will sigh, and he wrapped his arms around him wanting to be closer.

Just in case that closeness was threatened once again.

Hannibal suddenly tensed and pushed Will back in surprise.

“Hannibal?” he asked, frowning.

“What did you do to me?”

Will paled. “You’ve...remembered?”

He shook his head. “No, but I felt it. The betrayal. You...you did something.”

Will took his hand. “I will tell you everything.”

“When? You’ve said that before, Will, and I feel as if you’re just delaying my reaction for fear of it.”

A single tear fell down Will’s cheek. “Tonight.”

Hannibal looked at him coldly then, almost as if the hours they’d spent getting closer hadn’t happened at all and his chest ached as Hannibal turned away to stare out the window.

“I will await your explanation.”

He touched his shoulder and felt him tense up.

“I just hope you can forgive me. It wasn’t my fault.”

Hannibal didn’t look at him again as they turned toward the gates. “We’ll see.”

Chapter 4

The castle felt both familiar and yet entirely new as Hannibal got out of the car, staring up at its greatness. There was a coldness here, but he felt warmth fill him as he drew closer.

"...and it's been here for hundreds of years."

He turned to see Will looking nervous, his eyes filled with tears, and Hannibal couldn't help but want to comfort him.

But the feeling he'd felt earlier kept him at a distance.

Will's betrayal was still unknown, even if he cared for his safety, and he wasn't about to get any closer till he knew.

"It's beautiful," he said, looking at the castle again, "I feel…oddly at peace here, though I still feel as if…."

He heard Will sigh.

"You're missing something," he finished, making Hannibal turn to look at him.

"Yes."

"Hannibal, I—"

"Shall we head inside?" Hannibal said, turning away, "I'd like to see the interior."

“Yes, I think that’s wise.”

Tobias and Francis seemed to come out of nowhere, flanking them both, and despite how he’d felt earlier at the memories still so distorted Hannibal moved closer to Will. There were a set of double doors in front of them that opened even before they were touched, and the staff inside bowed, making Hannibal smile.

“It seems at least here your people are loyal enough to keep their derision private.”

“What makes you think they have any derision for you?”

Hannibal paused mid-step, and turned to see several staff members glaring his way before they quickly put on stoic expressions again.

“I know when I’m unliked, Will, it’s not hard to deduce.”

A woman in a dark suit blushed, her lip curling, and Hannibal looked away.

Will turned to look back at them.

“ATTENTION!” he said, causing everyone in line to look his way, “If ANY of you have anything negative to say about my husband *please* feel free to say it now. He already feels unwelcome in Newcliff. I will NOT have him feel unwelcome in his home,”

Hannibal saw everyone look down, bowing their heads, and he enjoyed the fear they all seemed to have for Will already.

Did they know what he’d done to his parents?

Or was he just that well respected?

No one said a word after Will's declaration, and the warm smile he gave Hannibal made it hard not to smile back.

"I stand corrected," he said, bowing as he looked up through his lashes, "May I have a tour, Mazasis? Or do you have duties to attend to?"

Will shook his head. "I have no duties, Meile," he said, "The only duty I've assigned myself for the rest of today is you."

Hannibal's smile widened as he held out his hand.

Will looked at the hand, as if he was unsure it wasn't a threat, and the warm touch of their hands together felt like a forgotten memory. He imagined they'd held hands as children, perhaps even hugged as they had been so young, and tears stung his eyes making him look away.

The conflicting feelings he had with Will were unwelcome, and he still did not think it best to trust so easily.

But why did he want to?

Will turned to Francis and Tobias. "Stay behind us, please," he said, "I…I want as much privacy as I'm allowed."

"Of course, Highness," Francis said, bowing.

Tobias barely held back a sneer as he bowed saying nothing.

Hannibal couldn't help but pull Will closer, wanting to anger him, and the immediate effect made him angrier than Tobias ever could be.

Will was *his* .

No one else's.

"We can start with the kitchen, and perhaps the bedrooms and the grand ballroom before the gardens and…"

"I'd like to see the gardens," Hannibal said, his voice suddenly thick, "I…I want to see the rose bushes."

Will froze.

"You…Meile…"

Hannibal had a sudden memory of a young boy with brown curls picking a red rose holding it out to him, hand bleeding from the thorns, and his instant worry. He took Will's hand, turning it over, and there in the middle was a scattering of scars. Will trembled when he touched them.

"I…I remember, yes."

"That's…I'm sure the longer you're here the more you will recall," Will said, his voice shaking as Hannibal looked up, "Though I hope it's all the good memories first."

"Will…"

He turned away fast and began to lead them forward.

“There’s not much daylight left,” he said, “We must get you to the rose bushes.”

Hannibal said nothing as they walked faster and more people seemed to appear out of nowhere. How many people worked in the castle he didn’t know, but it seemed not one of them raised a hand to save Will when he needed them most.

He squeezed Will’s hand as they finally made their way into a large library, catching his attention fast, and through a set of double doors that led to the garden at last. Will let out a long breath as the wind hit them again, and Hannibal looked around feeling that seem ache he’d hated so very much in the car.

Hannibal let go of Will’s hand, stepping onto the grounds, and there were flowers everywhere but he did not see roses.

“...planted in the early seventeen hundreds,” Will said, rushing ahead, “She was a lonely queen, and I’ve read her journals. The garden was…a comfort…to her. I suppose it’s been a comfort to me as well.”

“I suppose if you were given nothing else and were left all alone in your darkest hours, it would be.”

He saw Will look away, rushing ahead, and he knew he’d said the wrong thing.

“Leave us be,” he growled, not bothering to turn to Francis and Tobias as he took off after him.

Hannibal saw as Will went through a half maze of flowers, and caught up to him the minute they turned a corner. He pressed Will against the wall, hating the tears on his cheeks. “I apologize, Mazasis,” he said, ripping his tears with the tips of his fingers, “I did mean to make you…those memories I’m sure are…difficult.”

Will shook his head and closed his eyes. “It’s not…”

He hugged him and Will let out a sob, clutching his back.

“I will kill him for you,” he said, rubbing his back, “I promise you that as soon as I’m given the opportunity I will *end* that monster.”

Will held him tighter. “No, no, no,” he moaned, “You…” he pulled back, eyes wide, “He’ll hurt you, and take you away from me. Meile, now that I’ve finally found you again I will *not* let him take you.”

“I’m not afraid.”

“I *am* ,” Will said, grabbing Hannibal’s tie, “Please don’t. I…I’m safe, he…he can’t get me alone again. I’m safe.”

Hannibal touched his cheek. “Will…”

“And it wasn’t thoughts of him that were making me cry,” he said, smiling sadly, “Every word you said, it…it made me think of what I did to you.”

He put his other hand on Will’s cheek and stared into his eyes. “Are you ready to tell me now, Mazasis?”

“Meile…”

“Or should we see the roses first?”

Will sniffled. “The roses,” he said, letting out a long breath as he smiled, “I want to show you the roses.”

Hannibal nodded and put his arm around Will’s shoulders as they began to walk again. The maze wasn’t large, he knew, and the roses were in the center beside a stone bench. He remembered with sudden clarity chasing Will inside, the two of them laughing, and Will’s eagerness to please him.

“You hurt yourself for me,” he said, “I…I never want you to…bring pain to yourself to please me.”

Will leaned against him as they kept walking, shaking now, and when they came upon the red roses it took his breath away.

“I…I remember being so nervous,” Will said, his accent thickening, “My parents said you were the son of an important man, and we would marry when we were older and I wanted…I wanted you to like me. The look you gave me the minute we saw each other was…less than happy.”

Hannibal frowned. “I don’t remember.”

He sniffled as they sat down, and Will laid his head on Hannibal’s shoulder.

“You were unhappy because you didn’t want to marry,” Will whispered, “You didn’t care for the idea, and I…I thought it was romantic. I’d been reading Romeo and Juliet for my classes and…the thought of our ‘two houses’ uniting was otherworldly to me. I hadn’t finished it, of course.”

Hannibal smiled. “Of course. Did you ever?”

He felt Will tense, and thought perhaps he’d rush away again but he didn’t. “No.”

“Perhaps you can now.”

“I know how it ends,” he whispered, “I…I don’t imagine I’d enjoy it.”

Hannibal sighed.

“I remember worrying for your injuries,” Hannibal said, kissing his temple, “And rushing out to bring you to my father. Did you not get stitches?”

Will laughed. “I refused them,” he whispered, “I…I wanted to remember and after…it was all I had left.”

Hannibal frowned. “Will,” he started, “You said…that we killed together. Who did we kill?”

Will pulled away, standing, and walked to the bush reaching for a rose as Hannibal rushed forward pulling him back.

“I want to—”

He turned him roughly, and shook his head. “ *Never* ,” he growled, kissing Will’s hands, “Never bring yourself pain to please me. Not ever.”

“Meile…”

“Who did we kill, Will? Who?”

Will whimpered. “He hurt me,” he said, shaking his head, “He always…always liked to hurt me and we stopped him. I didn’t know what to do when you were gone, I…I knew I’d hurt you and I…I was so scared, I…thought…”

Hannibal grabbed him harder, and Will didn’t pull away as he snarled. “WHO?”

“Stammets,” Will whimpered, “Mister Stammets. My…my tutor.”

He let go, eyes suddenly filled with tears, and when Will ran for the rosebush he grabbed him again, the two of them falling to the grass together. Will sobbed, trying to reach, and Hannibal pinned his arms down as he stared into his eyes.

“That is why they took me away.”

Will nodded, tears still falling down his face, and Hannibal could not help but kiss him. It was inappropriate, the wrong time, and yet Will clutched at him like a lifeline moaning as he tasted him. He felt Will’s hardness against his hip, and pulled back panting for breath.

“Will…”

“No one else would listen,” he said, touching Hannibal’s cheek, “Not even my parents and…only *you* …you wanted to protect me. I know, even now, that…even if you hate me forever when you remember you’ll still want to protect me.”

Hannibal kissed him again, shaking with need, and he could hardly see through his tears when the sudden sound of the guards made him pull away.

“It seems,” he sighed, touching Will’s cheek, “We do not get privacy long.”

Will sniffled as they got up off the grass, wiping their clothes, and Tobias was the first to see them followed by Francis.

“Sire,” Tobias growled, “What has he—”

Will wiped his cheeks. “We were reminiscing,” he said, “And…perhaps more, though that’s not your business is it?”

“No, but—”

He took Hannibal’s hand and looked at Francis. “Do you have a blade?”

Francis took out a pocket knife, and Will opened it before he turned to the rosebush cutting off a bud. He handed it to Hannibal, who smiled, and brought it to his nose.

“Beautiful.”

Will blushed, looking away as he returned the blade, and squeezed his hand. “Do you want to see the library, Meile?” he asked, “It’s just inside.”

“Of course.”

They left the maze, hand in hand, and Hannibal stuffed the rose into his front pocket. The scent wafted up to him as they walked, stirring memories he wanted to know, and when they entered the open double doors he didn’t let go of Will’s hand.

“I changed the books,” Will said, as Hannibal moved them closer, “And if you’d like I can get you anything you—”

Hannibal pulled out Romeo and Juliet, showing it to him.

“Perhaps we can read later.”

Will frowned. “I told you it brings back painful memories.”

Hannibal touched his cheek. “We can create new ones, can’t we?”

He smiled and took the book from him. “I guess we can, though I think I’d much prefer privacy for the event.”

Hannibal smiled. “As would I.”

They brought the book on their tour, through every room and even the kitchens, before they came upon the room Hannibal had wanted to see most of all.

“This is…”

“The King’s suite,” Hannibal guessed, walking inside, “Yours.”

“Ours,” Will corrected, closing the door on the guards as he put the book down, “If you want it to be.”

Hannibal sat on the bed and patted next to him.

“Sit with me, Mazasis.”

Will hesitated.

“I think perhaps…I shouldn’t. Not until I’ve told you everything.”

“Will…”

“I’ll be too tempted,” he said, backing away to sit in an armchair, “It’s a year since my parents’ deaths, since…I got away from… *him* …and the only stirrings I’ve had below my waist have been in your arms.”

Hannibal frowned. “Will, we don’t have to…I would be perfectly happy just holding you and never going beyond that.”

Will shook his head. “No,” he hissed, “He won’t take this from me too. I…I’ve fantasized about you for so long and I…I know you’d never take what wasn’t given. I know.”

His chest ached. “Never.”

“But,” Will said, closing his eyes, “I still am not quite ready.”

“I can wait, Will.”

“But…”

Hannibal got up from the bed and walked across the room to kneel at Will’s feet. He watched Will’s eyes fill with tears again as he took his hand and kissed them.

“I can wait.”

Will sniffled. “You must think me a little boy,” he laughed, “I’ve done nothing but cry when we’re alone.”

“Crying is freeing,” he said, reaching up to touch his face, “And sometimes we cry because we’re happy.”

He sighed.

“You make me happy, Meile,” he said, “So happy that I…I almost want to never tell you.”

Hannibal put Will’s hand on his cheek.

“The connection I’ve felt since we met only grows deeper, Will, and I…I confess I fear the truth. I do not want to feel the pain I remembered so little of on the drive, not ever again.”

Will sniffled.

“I promised to tell you and I will.”

Hannibal kissed his palm, and entwined their fingers.

“It’s not dark yet,” he said, smiling, “We can for now just… *be* . Does that sound agreeable to you?”

Will nodded, standing, and Hannibal led him to the bed with ease. He laid down, and Hannibal held him tight kissing his cheek.

“Your worries about sharing a bed miraculously disappeared.”

He laughed nervously. “You talked me into it, Meile,” he said, taking his hand, “You…you were always good at talking me into things.”

Hannibal sighed.

“Can I ask?”

“Anything.”

“How long did I stay here before…before Stammets?”

Will let out a long breath.

“Nearly a month,” he said, “It…it felt then like forever but after you were gone I knew it hadn’t been enough. Not nearly enough.”

“Will…”

Will turned to look at him. “They feared you,” he said, “And yet they didn’t break the arrangement. Not then.”

“No?”

He shook his head, and gently pushed Hannibal down onto his back leaning over him.

“Not until…your family had no more influence.”

Hannibal froze.

“After they were dead.”

Will squeezed his hand, looking anywhere but in his eyes. “Yes.”

“Will…”

He looked up again.

“I think it’s time I told you.”

Hannibal put a hand on his mouth, suddenly filled with anguish, and shook his head.

“No.”

Will pushed his hand away and sat up angrily. “No? You’ve been so angry at me for feelings and you don’t know the truth of it all yet. But now you’re just willing to forget forever? You’ll never trust me until you know.”

“Will…”

He got up from the bed and threw open his closet grabbing a box that he threw onto the bed. It had no cover, and when Hannibal could see letters inside.

“I kept them all,” Will whimpered, shaking his head, “I kept them all and have read them so many times even the angry ones. I think my tears and yours are mixed together now as one, it’s…”

Hannibal opened the first envelope, and saw his own unrefined handwriting.

“Did you read them then?”

“I…I did.”

He sneered, pulling out letter after letter, and when he saw one that wasn’t his he froze looking up at him.

“My father wrote yours.”

“Meile…”

Hannibal brandished the letter, tears filling his eyes. “We fled,” he said, his voice shaking, “They ran us out of our home, had us begging for scraps of meat, and…he wrote yours hoping he’d help…he…”

He remembered now.

“You left me,” he said, the pain making his chest ache, “You knew what had happened and you just stopped. You watched my world crumble and never…never tried to be the only light I had.”

Will ran to the bed, grabbing his lapels, and shook his head. “I *tried!”* he whispered, his voice shaking, “I begged the maids, the guards…I tried to sell my cufflinks or even the jewels my grandmother gave but no one would…no one would listen. NO ONE WOULD HELP AND I WAS SO SCARED! I…”

Hannibal pushed the letters off the bed angrily.

“I wrote you for *years,* Will. *Years.* You were NOT a child,” he growled, “You could’ve run, you…”

Will reached for him and Hannibal pushed him off as he fell to the floor.

“Please, Hannibal, just…just let me…listen to me.”

Hannibal wiped his face as he reached for the door. “Like you listened to me?”

Will said nothing as he left the bedroom, slamming the door, and Tobias’s smug look made him sneer.

“He is *mine* ,” he hissed, coming up to him fast, “Even if I never touch him again he is *mine* . All mine.”

He left then, finding the nearest room, and closed the door before he fell onto the bed.

The horror of his family’s demise had rushed forward once again, and the inclusion of his own sorrows losing Will made things so much worse. He’d let his teenage heartbreak make him weak, and he’d lost them forever.

He thought of Will, cut off from him, but still felt so angry.

Will had been his closest confidant.

His everything.

Even so far away.

And every word they'd shared over the years had been false.

Was Will's love now not but a memory of the past?

How could he trust him again?

Hannibal rolled onto his back and stared up at the ceiling.

This room was cold, empty, and lonely, quite like the cell Will had freed him from.

Would this castle now become a new type of prison?

He pulled off his tie, throwing it to the floor, and buried his face into the nearest pillow. The castle's familiar smell did little to calm him, and though he had remembered the pain that had torn Will from his memory, not all returned.

Hannibal sighed.

Perhaps it would be better if they never did.

Chapter 5

Will didn't get up off the floor when Hannibal left, curled in a ball, and let the tears that he'd been waiting for overwhelm him.

Hannibal would never forgive him.

He put his hands to his mouth to drown out his cries, and felt like the weight that had been on him for so very long was crushing him beneath it.

The memories hit him all at once of Mason, laughing as he cut him, and how even when he screamed no one seemed to hear him.

Not since Hannibal.

And now, no one would hear him ever again.

Will puts his hands over his under his shirt, feeling the scars, and dug his nails in as he whimpered. The pain was better, something he could manage, and he fell into the familiar haze as his grief exhausted him.

He woke up in a dark room, unable to see, and crawled to the bed standing to turn on the light.

His room was desolate, quiet, and cold as he sat on the bed to check the time.

Five hours.

No one had come to check on him - which may have been Hannibal's doing but he was sure it wasn't - and yet he wished they had.

Will lifted his shirt and saw the marks he'd made with his nails, shallow scratches that barely hit the skin, and tears filled his eyes.

"Meile," he whispered, "I'm sorry."

He resisted the urge to fall back into bed and dragged himself to the door to walk into the hallway. Tobias and Francis were there, standing vigil, but neither man looked at him as he stepped out.

"Have I missed dinner?"

"No,sire," Francis said, "It's nearly finished."

Will nodded. "And…my husband?"

"Has not left the bedroom he occupied," Tobias mumbled, his voice nearly a growl.

He let out a breath.

"Let him know when it's time," he said softly, and tried to keep the emotion out of his voice, "And that…if he doesn't want to join me dinner can be sent his way."

"Of course."

Will left them then and headed away from temptation. Hannibal wouldn't welcome him, he knew, and to even attempt to speak now would be pointless. The staff all eyed him as he passed, and Will knew they'd heard his cries but also that they would not say a word.

They knew better.

He ended up outside sitting on the bench across from the rosebush that the moonlight barely lit in the dark.

The roses had always been a comfort to him, especially after he killed his parents, and as tears fell down his cheeks he wanted to grab hold but refrained.

I never want you to bring pain to yourself to please me.

Would Hannibal feel the same way now that he knew what had torn Will from his memories?

Would it please him to see Will covered in blood?

He was shaking as he stood, and walked closer to the roses, the scent only making him whimper.

“Meile.”

Will reached out, ready to grab, but suddenly like a phantom in the dark Hannibal yanked him back hard.

“ *Never* ,” he growled, gripping Will’s wrist hard, “Your pain is not my pleasure.”

He let out a sob, mot moving, and Hannibal didn’t soften his touch.

“Meile…”

Hannibal let him go just as rough, making Will stumble, and they stood apart again. Will couldn't help but stare, taking in the sight of him again, and sniffled.

"Dinner is ready," Hannibal mumbled, looking away, "They could not find you and I…I thought you may be here."

He smiled as a tear fell down his cheek. "You still know me so well."

Hannibal glared at him. "I know the boy who left me in the darkness," he said, his voice cold, "The man I met…is a stranger and always will be."

"Hannibal…"

He turned and started to walk off but Will rushed to grab his arm making him push him back till he fell in the grass.

"DO NOT TOUCH ME!"

Will let out a sob, barely able to see through his tears. "Will you hate me forever now?" he asked, hating the weakness, "Will you…never….be able to love me?"

Hannibal glared.

"We are strangers, *King.* What we feel for each other is irrelevant."

"Irrelevant?" Will laughed, falling back onto the grass, "I…I've loved you my whole life and you…you think that's irrelevant? I….I thought about you EVERY SINGLE DAY since you were gone and you hated me so much that you forgot me and now…now that you

remember…you hate me even more. I…I can't…imagine…a fate worse than to be irrelevant to you."

Hannibal's silence made him think he was gone, but when he turned he saw him standing there still.

But he wasn't looking at Will's face.

He looked at his belly, shirt ridden up, and Will sat up to pull it down.

"It's…"

"You do *not* mark yourself," he said, his voice shaking, "No one…"

"...marks what is yours but you?" Will finished, wiping his eyes, "I'm no longer yours, am I, Meile?"

Hannibal crouched down, and put his fingers under Will's chin.

"Even if I *never* touch you again," he said, his voice shaking, "You *are* mine, Will. Even if… I never…make a mark on you…my marks are the *only* ones that are allowed. Do you understand?"

Will shivered. "Yes."

Hannibal stood up again and held out his hand to Will.

"Well?"

“As you already screamed at me for even attempting to touch you, I’m not sure that this isn’t a dream.”

Hannibal grabbed his hand and pulled him up but let go immediately. “I assure you, *King* , this is no dream for either of us. Come.”

Will followed him, hope rising in his chest, and when they got to the dining room he was even happier to see Hannibal not take the furthest seat that had been laid for him instead sitting at his left while Will was at the table’s head.

“You could’ve…”

Hannibal’s lip curled. “I may be angry with you, *King* ,” he said, the word now feeling almost like an endearment even with the anger attached, “But I know no one else who wants me here and knowing *they* fear *you* I can at least take advantage to be sure they don’t poison me.”

Will frowned as one of the staff came to put meals covered over with silver lids, and unveiled venison with roasted potatoes. Hannibal picked up a fork and Will reached over to take a bite of his potato, eyeing the staff as he chewed.

He waited a moment as Hannibal looked at him in surprise and swallowed.

“Very good,” he said, eyeing the wait staff who moved to leave.

Hannibal nearly smiled as he cut his meat.

“What would come of me if it *had* been poisoned?” he asked, as Will cut his own.

“You’d be King,” he said, “And they would have to overthrow you to make it not so.”

Hannibal took a bite into his mouth and chewed.

“It’s dry,” he said, “But…manageable.”

Will smiled. “I’ll let them know.”

He reached for some wine and took a sip, eyeing Will. “Who would be King if I died then?”

Will’s smile faded. “Distant relatives,” he said, “They…they don’t come here anymore.”

Hannibal paused as he took a potato. “Why?”

He looked down at his food and cut his meat again, tears stinging his eyes.

“They just don’t.”

“Hmm.”

Their meal was mostly silent then, the thin camaraderie gone just as quickly as it had come, and when dessert came in the form of cake Will could hardly find delight in it.

“Well, this was….”

“Abysmal,” Hannibal finished, taking a bite, “And I don’t mean the food.”

Will frowned at him. “You don’t have to eat with me again,” he said, “I can have them bring your meals or take my own in the bedroom, it's not…”

Hannibal sighed as he took another sip of wine. “We’re married, Will,” he said, “It is common for married couples to eat together.”

“A stranger,” Will said, his voice almost a hiss, “You said we’re strangers.”

He looked at him. “We are.”

“So what does it matter if strangers eat alone?”

Hannibal smiled. “I suppose,” he said, running his fingertip along the rim of the wine glass, “As much as I may hate you at the moment I still…would prefer to have time to be sure you’re well.”

Will swallowed past the sudden lump in his throat. “Why?”

“You know why.”

He couldn’t hold back more tears. “You hate me and yet you’re worried about me?”

“I don’t…I cannot…fathom…what you have gone through since we were torn apart. But I know it was much, much worse than I could even imagine and no one heard you. Not one person.”

Will could hardly see through his tears. “Meile…”

A tear fell down Hannibal’s cheek. “I will *always* hear you, Mazasis,” he said, “Always.”

Will wanted to fall to his knees and beg for forgiveness, but he just sat there staring at the warmth he saw in Hannbal's eyes. "You won't hate me forever?"

Hannibal looked away as he drank the remains of his wineglass and stood with his back to Will.

"I suppose we'll have to wait and see," he said, his voice shaking, "Won't we?"

Will wiped the tears from his eyes, nearly laughing, and finished his wine feeling like all was not lost.

Hannibal cared about him.

He *heard* him.

All Will had to do was wait to be forgiven, and he would wait. No matter how long it took.

He'd wait.

Chapter 6

How strange it was to feel such affection for someone he wanted to hate.

Hannibal could hardly bring it in himself to ignore Will in the following days, often seeking out a view of him even in secret, and checking for markings or red rimmed eyes though he actively found none.

Will had returned to his duties, meeting via video often in an office it took Hannibal almost an entire day to find, and it was strange to see the ‘King’ versus the wounded man he knew was beneath the facade Will showed them all. He felt such anger knowing how long Will had been ignored even by his own parents, and wished he could’ve been there to see the terror in their eyes when Will snuffed out their lives.

But he hadn’t been there.

And as he found himself searching for answers, he started to realize that none of that was Will’s fault.

None of it.

The shackles of royalty had kept him bound to a monster and ruled by indifferent parents while actively trying to seek Hannibal out for years. It had just taken him much longer than he’d wanted. He knew he could forgive Will this - things beyond control were not a choice - yet struggled not to remember how abandoned he’d felt when no replies came while his family feared for each day.

But that didn’t keep him from Will.

No, not at all.

“You look…rested.”

Hannibal scoffed as he took a bite of bacon, one of many things on his plate along with sausage and an omelet of sorts, slightly better than most of the morning meals. “What did I look like before, King, that you’ve noticed rest in my face?”

Will blushed. “You looked tired the past week, and I’ve…I’ve seen light under your door late.”

He frowned. “Are you spying on me, Will?”

Will’s eyes widened. “What? No! I….” he blushed harder, “I get restless at night…often… and walk the halls if I can’t sleep. Since you’ve come it’s been helpful to see the light and know you’re here.”

Hannibal blinked. “I see.”

Will looked down again, taking a bite, and Hannibal thought he looked handsome today.

He looked handsome most days, almost ethereal, and he had an urge to run fingers through his curls.

“I won’t fault you for being a night person, Meile,” he said, his voice shaking just a bit, “But I won’t pretend I’m not curious as to what you’re doing.”

Hannibal took another bite and smiled. “Would it surprise you if I’ve been reading up on what I’ve missed in your life?”

Will blinked. “You…you’re researching me?”

“Why would I not, Will?”

“I just…I thought you were still angry.”

“I am.”

“And yet you want to know what I’ve done, and experienced.”

He sighed. “You’re my husband, Will.”

“I know that, but—”

Hannibal set his fork down, and was thankful that they were outside so he could see the prying eyes around them. Tobias and Francis were not far off, but not so close they could hear, and anyone else had come and gone.

“You came to free me,” he said, “After so long apart. The least I can do is see what you’ve done since then.”

He watched tears fill Will’s eyes. “Meile…”

“Mazasis,” he said, his hand dangerously close to Will’s on the table, “I don’t want you to ever fear me.”

“I don’t—”

“You fear my wrath for remembering. I know you do.”

Will shook his head. “I don’t.”

“Will…”

He grabbed Hannibal’s hand and squeezed. “I don’t, Meile,” he repeated, his voice but a whisper, ‘I…I would let you do anything you wanted to me. Kill me, kiss me….devour me. I don’t care if it’s you. I’ve never cared if it was you. You’re all I’ve wanted for so long, and I would be happy to get your wrath as long as I had your attention.”

Hannibal’s chest ached.

“Will…”

Will kissed his knuckles and he could not stop himself from trembling at his touch.

“You don’t have to stay up looking things up about me,” he whispered, putting Hannibal’s hand to his cheek, “All you have to do is ask. There isn’t anything I wouldn’t give you, or tell you. Not anymore.”

“What have I done to inspire such devotion?”

Will smiled through his tears. “You’re here,” he said, “That’s…that’s all. You’re here.”

Hannibal couldn’t find it in him to pull away, Will’s warmth an addiction already, and after so many years imprisoned he’d missed touch that wasn’t perfunctory. But never had he felt such pure unadulterated trust from another person. Not ever.

“Will….”

“What can I do to make you happy, Meile?” he asked, his voice thick, “I’d do anything.”

He sighed. “Will, it’s…” he moved to pull his hand away but Will held on putting a hand over the one on his cheek as a tear fell down touching both.

“I would beg here now in front of all of them,” he said, “I….I would cut my throat, I…”

Hannibal gripped his wrist. “I’ve told you before, Will, your pain is not my pleasure.”

Will whimpered. “But….but what if I can’t feel pleasure without the pain?”

He ached at Will’s confession. “We should not be speaking so plainly in front of everyone, this is a private conversation.”

“You won’t see me in private,” Will hissed, shaking his head, “I can’t…I know you may forgive me someday but you won’t…you only see me at meals or stalking from the shadows. I know you’re there, Hannibal. I always know you’re there. You can never hide from me when all I’ve ever done is wish you were by my side. I can’t *not* not know when you’re there.”

Hannibal pulled his hand back, making Will close his eyes letting out a whimper, and turned to look at Francis and Tobias. “Bring our meal to Will….the bedroom. We’ll continue there.”

He saw Will’s eyes open again in surprise, the delight in them making his heart skip a beat, and held out his hand that Will took with ease.

“Come.”

Will said nothing as they walked back toward the house, the silence for once filled with something not tense, and for the first time in nearly a week Hannibal walked into the

bedroom he'd expected to share. It seemed the same, though when he saw blankets on the floor he frowned.

"Is the staff not making your bed?"

He was surprised when Will let go of his hand to pick up the fallen blankets, and revealed a pillow beneath them. "I've asked no one to come into my room."

Their food was placed at a table near the balcony, and Hannibal watched Will with growing unease but waited until the door was closed to speak again.

"You're sleeping on the floor."

Will didn't turn around, hugging himself, and he could hear the pain in his reply.

"Yes."

"Will…"

"I've been having nightmares," he said, his voice shaking as he turned his face wet with new tears, "When I sleep in the bed."

"Will…"

"It's not the worst place I've slept," he said, smiling, "Do you remember when we hid from our parents that one night and slept in the garden?"

Hannibal smiled at the sudden memory. "Yes, you…you wanted to sleep near the roses and I had to tell you it was dangerous so we slept huddled together in a bush. You were so cold."

“And you were so warm,” Will sighed, coming closer, “I….I used to remember that when…” he closed his eyes, “I clutched at every memory we shared in that short time, I….I desperately clung to it, and I was grateful for them. You’ve been my rock for so long, Meile, and you had no idea.”

Hannibal grabbed his hand and pulled Will closer, but not into his arms.

“Are you going to tell me or do you need me to ask?”

Will was shaking as he let out a shaking breath. “He didn’t fuck me,” he said, his voice thick, “He…he liked to hurt me, telling me the things he’d do once we were wed, but he didn’t…he wanted me to be afraid but he…he took *his* pleasure.”

Hannibal’s lip curled. “And no one…”

“The marks were not visible,” Will said, his voice shaking, “Other than the…the ones on my stomach and I didn’t…I was so ashamed I…”

“Will, you have nothing to be ashamed of. That monster…”

He shook his head. “I’m not a child,” he said, “I…I let my fears of what he’d do make me let him treat me like a…a…”

Hannibal put both hands on Will’s face as tears fell down his cheeks. “You were abused, Will, and it was NOT your fault.”

Will let out a sob. “He’d touch me,” he said, “He…he didn’t fuck me but he…he…he liked to…” he whimpered, “The pain was easier to cling to than the pleasure. I…I know you wouldn’t be cruel to me, even if I asked you for both once I’m forgiven but if it’s not your… your preference I understand. I can add things, or….do it myself. I…”

Hannibal pulled him in all the way then, and could not help but hug him. Will was shaking as he buried his face into Hannibal's neck, and he could feel the tears on his skin.

"Mazasis…"

"My pain is not your..pl…easure," Will whispered, "I know that's what you've said and…"

"I will kill him," he growled, "I….will."

"I don't want you near him," Will whimpered, holding him harder, "I…I cannot imagine a worse thing, Meile, and I…I beg you not to even think about it."

Hannibal dug his nails into Will's back, and felt him shudder as he kissed his cheek.

"Will…"

Will sighed. "Mark me, Meile," he whispered, "Mark me."

He dragged his nails down Will's back even harder, and the moan he got in return went right to his cock. Hannibal's teeth ached with a sudden need to bite, mark, *claim* , like an animal let out of a cage, but he refrained just kissing Will's cheek again.

"Will…"

Will nuzzled against him as he sighed happily. "Thank you, Meile," he whispered, "Th…ank you."

“You don’t need to thank me, Mazasis, it’s not…”

Will lifted his head, and the smile on his face made Hannibal’s anger melt away.

“I’ll thank you every chance I get, Hannibal,” he said, his lip quivering, “I…I’ll thank you for waking up every morning, I’ll thank you…”

Hannibal pressed their foreheads together, and Will whimpered as he grabbed the back of his head. “You’re…quickly making it hard to keep my anger.”

Will laughed as more tears fell. “Don’t tell me that or I’ll keep crying.”

“Will…”

Will sighed. “Lay with me, for a while? We don’t have to do anything, I just…I haven’t slept in a bed for a few days and I know I’ll feel better with you.”

He nodded, saying nothing, and together they laid in the bed. Hannibal hugged him from behind and Will sighed, leaning back in his arms. The sun came in through the curtains, the opaque white barely stopping the light, and he had instant thoughts of privacy.

“We need thicker curtains.”

“Ok,” Will sighed, “Whatever you want.”

Hannibal pressed his nose to the back of Will’s neck and breathed in his scent with a sigh. How could a stranger be such a comfort already?

“Will?”

“Hmm?”

“Do you remember when we signed our marriage decree?”

“Yes.”

“I’d…I’d like to see it.”

“Mmm,” Will mumbled, as he started to fade, “I brought it with me to the US, it’s…” he yawned, “In with my passport papers.”

Hannibal started to run his fingers through Will’s curls, giving in to the urge, and the noise Will emitted made him smile.

“I will sleep here tonight.”

Will turned fast, suddenly wide awake as he stared at him. “You don’t have to,” he said, “I can…”

He shook his head. “Kings aren’t meant to sleep on the floor,” he said, making Will frown, “They deserve every comfort.”

“Oh,” Will said, looking away again, “I…I’m glad you…”

“Look at me, Mazasis.”

Will turned with tears in his eyes. “I don’t need you to see me as a King,” he said, “I want you to see me as yours. I want you to see me as…”

Hannibal put two fingers over his lips. “I’ve told you already, Will,” he whispered, “You *are* mine, and I’ve already begun to struggle to think of sharing you with *anyone* else, let alone an entire kingdom of people who openly despise me. You’re mine to hold, mine to mark, and mine to keep. That does not mean you deserve to be in pain for any you caused me against your will.”

He moved Hannibal’s fingers and let out a whimper. “Have you forgiven me?”

“I want to, Will,” he admitted, “I want to.”

Will hugged him then, pushing Hannibal down to the bed, and he held him tight again.

“That’s…that’s….that’s good to hear,” Will whispered, “I…I can hold onto that.”

Hannibal sighed, running fingers through his curls again, and Will shuddered, still holding on tight.

“Rest for me, Will. Can you do that?”

Will nodded, sighing as he laid his head on Hannibal’s chest, and almost as if by instinct they were holding hands.

“Hannibal?”

“Yes?”

“I…I want to show you off to them,” Will whispered, “To all of them.”

“That may not be a very good idea.”

“You’re my husband, Meile, and…”

“We have yet to perpetuate the story of our shared past and made them warm to me. Give it time, Will. That’s all I ask.”

He sighed. “Ok.”

“But if you want me for other duties, or just…as a fear tactic to deter your enemies…I think now is the best time.”

He felt Will’s smile against his neck. “I can be scary just fine on my own, Meile.”

“Can you?”

“Yes,” he said, “Remember what I did for us….I can do it again.”

Hannibal turned and looked down at Will. “I will not forget, nor will I ever not be proud of you for it.”

Will stared at his mouth, and he resisted the urge to bring their lips together.

It was not the time.

“I love you, Hannibal.”

He touched Will’s cheek. “I know.”

Will kissed his hand, and he felt the touch go through his body like a brand. “Meile…”

“Mazasis, you…you undo me.”

He put his cheek to Hannibal’s hand and his eyelashes fluttered in pleasure. “Every time he touched me I pretended…that you were there…that it was…your hand making me…”

“Will….”

Will opened his eyes. “I fought to get you here,” he said, his voice almost a growl, “And if… if he retaliates…I will fight to keep you.”

Hannibal pulled him up, their lips mere inches apart, and he ached to kiss him.

“You will not fight alone.”

He sighed. “Meile, I…I want…”

“What do you want, Will?”

“You,” Will said, licking his lips, “I want you.”

Hannibal leaned in and pressed a kiss to his cheek that soon became two, then three, and went further down till Hannibal found himself sucking a mark on his neck. Will moaned, gripping his hand, and he bit, making him cry out. The obvious scent of ejaculate made Hannibal pull back his mouth, surprised, and Will blushed. “I…I’m sorry. I…”

He pushed Will down onto the bed, suddenly ravenous, and stared into his eyes.

“Just from one bite?”

“It’s *you* , Meile,” he said, blushing, “It’s not just *one* bite. It’s *your* bite.”

Hannibal kissed him then, shoving their mouths together, and Will let out a sob clutching him hard. He resisted the urge to take all Will offered, knowing he could have anything, and just rocked forward as their tongues brushed. Will reached for his belt but he pushed his hands back, and pulled his mouth away.

“No.”

“But…”

“Pleasure doesn’t always have to be mutual, Mazasis,” he whispered, “It pleases me to… please you. I…I can think of nothing better.”

Tears filled Will’s eyes. “Meile…”

Hannibal kissed him again, ignoring his own need, and when they broke for breath he kissed his cheek.

“You should cleanse yourself,” he said, “You’ll be uncomfortable otherwise.”

Will sighed. “You’ll be here?”

“I’m not going anywhere.”

He saw Will’s reluctance to part, but he went to the ensuite bathroom while Hannibal rolled onto his back to stare up at the bed’s canopy. His cock was still hard, waiting for release, and yet he did not move to touch.

The sudden thoughts of all Will had gone through for a monster’s pleasure made him ill, and soon his hardness quickly turned soft before Will came out again. He took his place in front of Hannibal, who held him still, and he sighed.

“Will you do it again?”

“Do what again?”

“Mark me?”

“Yes.”

Will wiggled back against him, and he held him tighter. “Can I…”

“Can you…?”

“Mark you?”

Hannibal shuddered. “Yes.”

Will sighed. “Have you forgiven me, Meile?”

“I’m…I need to…”

“Don’t…don’t try to make me feel better,” Will said, “Not if you don’t mean it. I…I’m happy you’re warming to me again, even if you’re still angry. I…I’d let you do whatever you wanted even if you never forgave me.”

He pressed a kiss to Will’s cheek. “I would never use you that way, Mazasis. Not ever.”

“Meile…”

“Rest, Will. For me?”

He sighed. “I’ll try.”

“Thank you.”

Hannibal held him till he felt Will relax, leaning back in his embrace. It didn’t take long, mere minutes, and when he turned Will to his back he looked down at him.

He could still remember the first time he’d seen him, the tiny little curly haired cherub he’d been, and how much he’d loathed the sight.

There were things he still didn’t remember.

But he remembered more every day.

“We’ll make new memories,” he said, brushing the hair from Will’s face, “You and I.”

Will sighed, turning toward him, and he held him tight.

Had he forgiven him?

No.

But did he want to push him anyway?

Not anymore.

Chapter 7

Hannibal was still *here.*

Will lay still as he watched Hannibal sleep beside him, tears in his eyes, and resisted the urge to touch just to reassure himself this wasn't a dream.

He hardly took a breath, worried he'd wake him, and tears filled his eyes as he moved close enough that he could feel Hannibal's breath across his lips.

All at once he let out a breath, loud enough that he woke him, Hannibal's eyes coming open at once.

"Sorry," he said, panting for breath, "I…"

Hannibal took his hand and squeezed. "We slept all night."

"Yes."

He ran his thumb over Will's knuckles and Will couldn't help but shiver at the gentle touch.

"You had no nightmares."

He shook his head. "No."

"As it should be."

“Meile?”

“Yes?”

Will could not help but move closer, unsure, and Hannibal did not push him away. “Last night you…you said you hadn’t forgiven me yet.”

“That is what I said, yes.”

He let out another breath as Hannibal caressed his hand. “But you’re here.”

Hannibal squeezed his hand again. “Yes, I’m here.”

Will felt tears fall down his cheeks. “I’m…I’m glad you’re here.”

Hannibal smiled and kissed the top of his hand. “As am I, Will. I…I’ve missed you this past week.”

Will smiled. “You followed me around so much I don’t know how you could’ve missed me,” he teased, “And…” his smile faded, “We’re strangers, right? How can you miss a stranger?”

“I don’t know, but….I did,” Hannibal sighed.

They stare at each other, not looking away, and Will can’t help but want to kiss him but doesn’t try.

“We should get up.”

“Why?”

“It’s morning,” he whispered, “The staff…”

“Are paid to do as you say, and you’ve asked them not to come inside.”

Will moved closer to him, and Hannibal put a hand on his waist as he pulled him in to lay on his chest. He closed his eyes, and breathed in Hannibal’s scent while he reached up to touch the spot on his neck where Hannibal bit him. It’s still fresh, but no blood was spilled and he knew it wouldn’t last.

“Meile?”

“Yes?”

“Do you…” his voice wavered, “Do you remember killing Mr. Stammets?”

Hannibal held him tighter. “No, but I would ask…how did he die?”

Will whimpered as he clutched him harder. “We pushed him down the stairs,” he whispered, his voice shaking, “They…they lead out the back of the maze, not far from the roses. My father found us with knives because he wouldn’t die….he…he couldn’t move after he fell and…we…”

“We stabbed him…together.”

“Y…yes,” Will said, letting out a sob, “He…he was so scared,” he laughed, “So scared.”

Hannibal turned Will onto his back and stared down at him, the tears in his eyes making Will's only get worse. "I hope I do remember, Mazasis," he sighed, "I…I want to remember it all."

"Meile…"

"No one knows about him then?" he asked, touching Will's cheek.

"No," Will whimpered, smiling, "It was an accident, that's…that's what the papers said. A very unfortunate…accident."

Hannibal smiled. "Very unfortunate."

Will laughed. "We were so happy after, and my father…the…" he shook his head, "He pulled me away and I remember…I was screaming…I…Meile…"

Hannibal kissed him then, making Will whimper, and he dug his nails into the back of Will's neck making his whole body shudder as they continued. He reached up to press his hand deeper, and Hannibal didn't stop him, tasting Will further until they broke for breath.

"Hannibal…"

He licked his lips as he stared down into Will's eyes.

"I cannot imagine the fear you felt for so long, Will," he said, his anger making Will grab his hand, "I…I felt so alone after I was taken in with my uncle and aunt but by then…I'd forgotten you. If I had known…I would've come and…taken you away."

Will sniffled as he shook his head. "You wouldn't have," he said, "You were so angry at me, and I deserved it. I did. I still deserve it, I should've tried harder. I could…'ve…" he hugged

Hannibal and buried his face into his neck as Hannibal pressed down on him, “I could’ve killed them sooner. Then…then I wouldn’t have had to deal with Mason, or…anything else.”

“Will…”

“He would’ve killed me,” Will said hoarsely, “All that time…all that…fear and pain…he didn’t want to keep me, he….”

Hannibal pulled back to shake his head. “He would’ve kept you in a prison of his own making,” he hissed, “Monsters like that, Will, they never stop. Right now there’s someone else who’s suffering because he still lives.”

Will pulled back and sat up, eyes wide. “You…you don’t know that.”

“Will…you think he’d just stop with you? You think you were his only victim while he had you?”

He shook his head, tears beginning to blur his vision. “No, he…he’s…”

Hannibal grabbed Will’s face with both hands and pressed their foreheads together.

“I don’t mean to upset you, Mazasis,” he sighed, “This isn’t…I’m not trying to blame you for someone else’s suffering, but…if you don’t let me go after that monster, if…if you beg me not to I will not. But…more have suffered after you and more suffer still. I assure you.”

Will whimpered. “I…I didn’t…no, no, no…”

Hannibal hugged him and he clutched at him hard as he started to sob. Will was shaking as he rubbed his back, and Hannibal kissed his cheek as he struggled not to scream.

Had his fear made it possible for more to suffer because he wouldn't touch Mason?

"Shh….I'm here, Mazasis. I'm here."

Will couldn't stop sobbing, face buried in Hannibal's neck, and when he felt like he might faint he lifted his head to look at Hannibal again.

"I can't lose you again, Meile," he whimpered as Hannibal touched his cheek, "I can't."

"You have power, Will," Hannibal said, "So much power that you're not using."

"So does he," Will said, his voice shaking, "You…you don't know him. I don't know who is and isn't on his side, or…or…who won't stab me in the back because he asked them to. I can't trust anyone but you, Meile. I have no one but you."

Hannibal pulled Will down onto his chest. "Then…perhaps you and I need to start making some friends."

Will frowned. "Friends?"

"You wanted to show me off, didn't you, Will?" he asked, brushing the hair from Will's face, "Perhaps we should introduce me to people in power and…make friends that we can trust to help us rid the world of that monster once and for all."

His chest suddenly ached at the thought of sharing Hannibal with anyone, or bringing him out in the open for the rich and powerful to feast upon like Will knew they would. "I don't…I don't care about that anymore."

"Will…"

Will shook his head. “I…I don’t want to, Meile. You can call me selfish, make me…make me feel like I’m terrible for even thinking it but no one matters to me but you. No one.”

He ignored the stab in his belly at the thought of Mason hurting someone else, the memories of his scars suddenly feeling brand new wounds, and sighed as Hannibal kissed him again ever so softly.

“As you wish.”

They didn’t say anything else for what felt like hours, wide awake just basking in being close, and Will’s stomach growling felt like an intrusion upon their alone time.

“We should call for breakfast.”

“No, I…I’m fine.”

Hannibal kissed his cheek as he held him from behind. “We don’t have to leave, Will, we can stay here all day if we must but…we must have some form of sustenance.”

Will smiled as he turned to him. “Well, at least one of us has a full meal right in front of him. Unless you've given up cannibalism?”

Hannibal smiled. “I’d sooner begin cutting pieces off myself before you, Mazasis.”

His words should not have felt like a love confession but yet tears came to Will’s eyes. “I’d give myself to you freely if you asked.”

“I know.”

Will entangled himself from Hannibal's arms and sat up on the edge of the bed. "I'll…I'll call for breakfast."

Hannibal didn't say anything else as he walked to the door, and Will looked out to see Francis but not Tobias waiting.

"Sire?"

"We'd like breakfast," he said, frowning, "Where is Tobias?"

Francis sneered. "He's…indisposed."

"What does that mean?"

He sighed. "Sire, I think…perhaps…Tobias…"

The sound of footsteps made them both pause, and Tobias came down the hall looking forlorn.

"Why have you left your post?" Will said, "You know where you're supposed to be, Tobias."

His face brightened and then he sneered as he looked at Will coldly. "We are allowed breaks, Majesty," he said, coming closer, "I was taking mine."

Will sighed. "Go have the cooks ready breakfast for Hannibal and I."

Tobias frowned. "When shall I tell them to expect you?"

“Have it brought to us,” Will said, “We don’t wish to be disturbed today.”

Tobias’s lip curled. “As you wish.”

Will watched him go, not moving, and when he was gone far enough he spoke again.

“What was it you were saying, Francis?”

Francis looked down the hall, not saying a word, and it took Will more than a minute to realize he was listening for Tobias’s footsteps.

“He is not loyal, Majesty,” he said, “He…he speaks out of turn and I think it unwise to keep him on your guard.”

Will froze. “Has he spoken of my husband?”

Francis nodded.

“Has he threatened him with harm?”

He shook his head.

“But he’s spoken against him?”

Francis nodded again.

Will gripped the doorframe hard.

“As soon as he returns I want you to go on break and begin to make a list of possibles for his replacement. Do *not* tell him about this conversation.”

Francis bowed. “I would never betray you, Majesty.”

“I know. Thank you for your loyalty.”

Will shut the door and leaned against it as he struggled not to let loose his anger.

How *dare* Tobias even *think* to still speak out against Hannibal?

“Will?”

He turned to see Hannibal sitting up in their bed.

“I’m sorry,” he said, coming over, “I just…”

“I have a very keen sense of hearing, Mazasis,” Hannibal said as he crawled across the bed to his side, “I heard everything.”

Will sat down beside him, and Hannibal put an arm at his back.

“Tobias wants you, Will,” he said, his voice almost a growl, “I knew it from the moment he first glared my way.”

He frowned. “Tobias has been one of my guards since I was a teenager, he…he was in my father’s young guard and was put at my side directly from that. I trusted him.”

“That was before,” Hannibal said, taking his hand, “This is now.”

Will sighed. “He’s never shown any jealousy before, not even when…when Mason was here.”

Hannibal tensed up beside him. “He was your guard when Mason came to call?”

He felt tears fill his eyes. “Francis and Tobias have been my guards together for as long as I can remember, Meile. Though…Mason never…he didn’t…not here. Only when he insisted we visit or that I…I visit alone.”

“Will…”

“My parents called it,” he let out a sob as he covered his mouth, “A marriage test for me to… see how my life would be.”

Hannibal grabbed Will’s chin and turned him as tears blurred his vision.

“How long? How long did he have such access?”

“Five years,” Will said, “I…I refused to let them dissolve our marriage, and he dangled such power and money in front of them that they finally decided they would force my hand.”

Hannibal frowned. “The power and money they already had was not enough?”

“My parents were selfish,” he said, his voice shaking, “And they…they wanted what he promised. I told you this already.”

“You said they forced your hand? What suddenly made you so angry that you felt the need to…end them and your torture?”

Will shook his head. “They…they threatened you, Meile. Mason knew of you, of our marriage, and yet he’d never threatened you. I think he just wanted….”

Hannibal kissed him softly. “I’m so proud of you, Will, for…for bringing us together again. I…I would have never known you if you hadn’t and…”

“Meile…”

“Five years,” he growled, “Was Mason the only one who tried to wed you? Was he…”

Will sniffled. “No, he wasn’t the only one but I…I was a difficult marriage prospect. Any true means that weren’t underhanded in order to wed me to someone of means was met with difficulty.”

Hannibal smiled. “What kind of difficulty?”

Will moved to lay his head on Hannibal’s shoulder but was surprised when Hannibal moved his head down to his lap instead. He sighed as Hannibal ran fingers through his hair.

“We were apart for decades, Meile,” he said, smiling, “I…had lots of time to cause trouble.”

“Will…”

He turned his head and looked up at him. “Would it please you to know I bit some of them? Snarled like a dog? Screamed at night to make them think me mad?”

Hannibal touched his cheek. “Yes.”

“I guarded our marriage certificate with my life,” Will said, his voice suddenly shaking, “And…I only…I only gave it up when they said they wanted to hurt you. I couldn’t let them hurt you.”

Hannibal sighed. “Will…”

“He would hurt you, Meile,” Will whimpered, “He…he *could* hurt you. The letters he sent after I decreed I was going to bring you home with me, the…the messages…he was always full of glee when he saw me…when he…had me all to himself…I’d never heard him angry before and I…I can’t have him near you. I just…”

Hannibal leaned down to take Will into his arms just as a knock came to the door. He hugged him as Hannibal called out.

“Come in!”

Tobias paused in the doorway. “What have you done to him?” he growled, “Why…”

Will turned with a snarl. “Tobias, stand down!” he yelled, “Just leave the food and go! I am not a child and Hannibal is obviously NOT hurting me!”

Tobias looked confused, almost hurt, and Will looked away as he heard his footsteps go across the room. The tray was set down with a clang and he left without another word.

Hannibal kissed Will’s cheek. “He is a problem.”

“It’s being taken care of.”

“Good.”

They headed for the table together, hand in hand, and Will moved their chairs close as they took the cover off each plate. He saw a plate obviously filled with his favorites: cured ham, eggs with cheese, and toasted fresh bread along with strawberries. Hannibal’s plate was plain eggs, toasted bread, and sausage. Will grabbed Hannibal’s hand before he took a bite and picked up his fork.

“Will…”

“We only have each other, Meile,” he said, taking a bite, “And if I die first…you know what to do.”

Hannibal squeezed his hand. “That will *not* happen.”

Will smiled. “Well,” he said, stabbing his own eggs, “We’ll see, won’t we?”

Hannibal didn’t let go of his hand throughout breakfast, their first together in what felt like so long, and Will couldn’t help but feel like he was almost forgiven.

Almost.

“Meile?”

“Yes?”

He blushed shyly as he took a sip of juice. “Have you forgiven me yet?”

Hannibal paused mid-bite and set his forkful down as he frowned. “Soon, Will. I just…have to get over the last of my anger, but…I’m not going anywhere I promise you.”

He pulled Will in close and kissed him softly, making Will sigh.

“You don’t have to promise me anything,” Will said, tearing up again, “Just this…for now… is enough.”

Hannibal touched his cheek. “You kept your promise to me for so long,” he said, “I’m allowed this promise, aren’t I?”

Will smiled. “I guess you are, Meile,” he said, tears falling down his face, “I guess you are.”

Chapter 8

Hannibal knew Will did not want him to kill Mason Verger, but that did not stop him from researching the man.

Will had gifted him a tablet of his own to do such a task, and every evening he'd find himself searching for more information about the man who'd hurt him until he knew more about him than he did his own husband.

Mason was a billionaire with much clout in various circles with money to burn, and his delusions of grandeur aside, the skeletons in his closet were still that though there was much talk of his predilection for young children. There was even talk he'd killed his own parents to inherit, and his sister was a veritable prisoner that he barely let out on her own. Hannibal suspected she may be another victim among his many.

But his power was obvious when most of the information that wasn't favorable all came from unsubstantiated sources and he'd yet to see even a sliver of repercussions. All his research did was make him want to give Mason Verger the punishment he truly deserved.

But for now, he'd do as Will asked.

Will had gotten much happier since Hannibal had stopped pushing him away, and truth be told Hannibal felt his own mood shift exponentially the longer he was in his husband's presence. That happiness was obliterated when at the end of that next week Will came into the library with a somber expression.

"Will? What's happened?"

"I had that meeting I told you about," he said, sitting down next to him with a sigh and letting his head fall in Hannibal's lap, "With the advisors."

Will's advisors were a board of three, all chosen by him after his parents' deaths but Hannibal had yet to see him leave a meeting with them happily. He ran his fingers through Will's hair.

"They've upset you."

He sighed. "I'm not…"

"You're lying in my lap, Mazasis," he said, turning Will's cheek to make him look up, "You're upset."

Will frowned. "They want…they said I've kept you hidden too long."

"I already told you we should make an appearance publicly."

"I know, but—"

“Will, the people of Newcliff already don’t see me favorably and it seems it’s sullied their opinion of you for bringing me here.”

“I don’t care.”

“I know that, Mazasis,” Hannibal said, leaning in closer, “But you should care. You want people to love you and at best tolerate me.”

He sighed. “They want…they said that maybe we should give an interview if I’m uncomfortable with a large public event.”

Hannibal ran his hand over Will’s cheek. “With what publication?”

“There’s a late-night show where they interview celebrities called Tonight Now with a host named Cherrie. She’s…it’s mostly fluff and tabloid fodder.”

“All the better.”

“Why would it be better? She could ask…”

Hannibal kissed him softly. “She will ask all the wrong things, but we will answer them because it’s what no one expects us to do. She can ask me if I plan to murder anyone now that I’m your king’s consort and I will answer quite truthfully.”

Will smiled. “What would your answer be then?”

He smiled. “I’ll do anything for my King.”

Will blushed. “Meile…”

He brushed his fingers under Will’s chin. “As I said to you before, all we have to do is show affection and craft the perfect narrative and they’ll all be happy to see us happy. Tell them we’ll do an interview.”

“I…”

“As soon as possible.”

Will nodded. “I will.”

“Don’t let yourself get worked up over this, Will,” he said, kissing him again, “I think it will be a good thing.”

Will frowned. “Why would it be a good thing? We’d have to…pretend…in front of tons of…”

Hannibal frowned. “Would we be pretending, Mazasis? Truly?”

He watched Will’s cheeks flush as he stared up at him and couldn’t help but touch his face again.

“I wouldn’t, no.”

“Will…”

Will moved to sit up and Hannibal put a hand on his chest keeping him down.

“Let me go, Hannibal.”

“No.”

Tears filled Will’s eyes. “You’re teasing me, and I don’t…I don’t like it.”

“Will, I’m not doing anything of the sort. I hold you in high affection, and I…I find myself drawn to you more and more each day. Anything I would do in front of the interviewer would be the truth, I assure you.”

“You still…you haven’t said you…”

Hannibal sighed. “I haven’t forgiven you completely, no.”

“Then it’s not true,” Will whispered, “You can’t say you have feelings for me and then that you still hate me. You can’t have it both ways, Meile! You…”

He kissed him then, hardly able to stand his tears, and Will whimpered as he put arms around his neck pulling him down further. The angle made things a bit difficult and yet Hannibal made no move to sit them up, desperate to taste, and when they broke for breath, he felt almost lightheaded.

“I never said I hated you, Will,” he admitted, “Did I?”

“I…”

Hannibal kissed his forehead and Will whimpered in response.

“You’re my husband, Mazasis,” he said, “Let me be yours.”

Will sighed. “Hannibal, I…”

Hannibal lifted his head and smiled down at him. “We share a bed every night, Will,” he said, “And…though we’ve yet to….consummate…our union I still feel this is the most intimate relationship I’ve ever had.”

He saw Will’s eyes light up at his words and felt an overwhelming need to kiss him again.

“I love you, Hannibal.”

“I know, Will, and that…is something I wish I could say in return.”

Will sat up and crawled into his lap, hugging him around the neck as he held him.

“You don’t have to,” he said, “I just…I just needed to say it.”

“Will…”

He pulled back to smile at him. “I’ll call them about the interview,” he said, “They might want to see us both beforehand and find out our plans.”

“Of course.”

“They might tell you not to be truthful, but I want you to be. Okay? I want…I want you to be yourself.”

Hannibal smiled. “You’re certain? That may ruin things before we begin them.”

Will smiled and touched his cheek. “I do, Meile. I’ve already started to get to know you again and it hasn’t changed my feelings at all. You’re…you’re you .”

“Will…”

“I’ll try to be truthful…about most things I can.”

Hannibal pressed their foreheads together. “I wish you could be about everything.”

“I know.”

“This will be a good thing, Will. I’m sure of it.”

Will sighed, and pulled out his phone as he leaned on Hannibal’s shoulder. “I hope so.”

Hannibal watched him dial, and rubbed his shoulders as he began to speak.

“This is William Graham,” he said, “Yes. Yes. We’ve decided to do it,” he said, frowning, “Yes, I’m sure you’re pleased. Yeah, I expected you would. Yes. Yes. Not tonight, we need to be alone. Thank you. I’ll call you with an ETA and any questions. Goodbye.”

He ended the call and all but curled up in Hannibal’s lap, the automatic urge to put his arms around holding Will close making him suddenly remember something.

The two of them together in the woods.

Young Will crying, his face covered in tears, and Hannibal’s rage.

‘I’ll kill him for you, Mazasis. I swear I will.’

Young Will’s hopeful gaze made his chest ache. ‘Can we do it together, Meile?’

“Hannibal! HANNIBAL!”

Hannibal was startled out of the memory, and Will looked on the verge of tears as he touched his face.

“Mazasis, I…”

“What did you remember?”

“You…” he said, his voice thick, “Telling me about Stammets, I’m certain of it. I promised to kill him for you and you…you asked to do it…”

Will smiled as a tear fell down his cheek. “Together,” he finished, “I asked you if we could do it together. Meile, you…you remembered.”

Hannibal frowned. “Yes, not exactly a happy memory.”

“No, but…” Will laughed, “You remembered. You…you’re remembering more.”

He nodded. “I suppose the more we do things that were the same then I might associate them with a past memory.”

Will kissed him again and his smile made Hannibal’s heart skip a beat.

“Then I have an idea.”

“Are you suggesting we murder someone, Will? Because I do have a very prime candidate on the premises who's just steps away, I'm sure.”

Will laughed as he got up from the couch and pulled him. “No,” he laughed, “I’m still looking at replacements and we don’t have a better guard yet.”

“Will….”

He pulled him down the hallway and through several open spaces past staff who glared Hannibal’s way until they were outside.

“Where are we going?”

Will grinned. “You’ll see.”

“I suppose I will, since I have no idea where you’re taking me.”

Will took them through the maze, the memory of the last time they were there making Hannibal frown, and when they got past the roses he stopped short at the stairs.

“This…”

“It’s where we…you know. Come on.”

Hannibal held Will’s hand as they went down the stairs, oddly steep, and when they got halfway he started to see dark marks that were obviously not supposed to be there.

“It’s been a long time but…it never quite washed away,” Will said, slowing down, “I…I used to come here a lot. My parents didn’t approve but they couldn’t stop me. I almost pushed a few suitors down these stairs.”

He smiled. “You weren’t feeling murderous with them?”

“No,” Will said, his voice getting quieter, “I just…I felt sad when they were here, not angry.”

“Will…”

They got to the bottom and Hannibal stopped to look at the very large darker marks. He let go of Will’s hand and bent down just as Will did the same. “You were so…I thought I’d be scared,” he said, his voice shaking as Hannibal looked up to see tears on his face, “But I was just so happy. He was gone and wouldn’t hurt me anymore.”

“Will…”

He sniffled and wiped his face with the back of his hand. “I thought I’d be a lot happier bringing you here but…”

Hannibal sat down and pulled Will closer until he was again in his lap the same as before. He kissed his cheek and Will buried his face against Hannibal’s neck.

“I’m surprised you can be happy in the house at all after what you’ve had to deal with.”

He sniffled. “You’re here now,” he sighed, “I’ve never been this happy. Not ever.”

“Will…”

Will kissed his neck and he felt the touch like a brand, arching his neck to meet Will’s lips.

“You are mine,” he said, his voice shaking, “When you said ‘Let me be yours’ before you… you are, Meile. You are.”

“Will…”

He leaned back as Will laid him down across the final large concrete stair, aching as Will straddled him. The look in his eyes had Hannibal aching already, and he made no move to stop Will as he reached for his belt.

“Can I?”

“Yes.”

Will undid his belt, hands shaking further, and when he opened Hannibal’s pants it was obvious he’d never done this on his own which had Hannibal suddenly angry.

“You don’t have to, Will.”

He looked up with wide eyes. “You don’t want me to touch you?”

“No, I…I would very much enjoy that but if you’re unsure or uncomfortable…”

Will sniffled. “I want to,” he said, “I…I’ve had dreams about this, about you for as long as I could remember. I…I had more dreams when you were on trial, dreams that…” he blushed as he reached into Hannibal’s waistband, staring down at him, “...would probably surprise you.”

Hannibal smiled. “Would they?”

He blushed as he took him in hand, and Hannibal moaned at the touch. “Yes,” he sighed, rocking forward, “I…I used to…I dreamt that you…you held me down…across that big table you sat at with your lawyer and…ate me.”

Hannibal’s lip curled. “Will…”

Will moaned as Hannibal rutted forward, and he reached for Will’s trousers with eager hands.

“Meile…”

“I need to see you,” he whispered, “I need…this needs to be us both, Mazasis. It…it needs to be.”

He leaned in further, pressing his lips to Hannibal’s softly, and when Hannibal finally had him in hand he let out a sob, shaking uncontrollably as he stared into Hannibal’s eyes.

“Will?”

Will’s eyes filled with tears as he smashed their mouths together, and Hannibal’s chest ached as he let out a sob when he moved to stroke him again. He let go and Will cried out, trying to pull him back.

“NO! I…I WANT THIS! I…I…I want this!”

He pulled Will down on top of him their pants still at their knees, and his anger at the monsters who’d given him such trauma made him turn to bite Will’s neck. It was a gift, knowing Will would enjoy, and he moaned rutting forward.

“Meile…”

“Touch us both, Will,” he whispered, biting again softly, “Bring us to completion.”

Will let out a sob, his shaking hand trying to grab them both, and Hannibal moaned as he moved again.

“Meile…please…”

He groaned as Will moved faster, biting along the front of his throat, and when he bit down hard near the left Will came in a rush still trying to bring him to pleasure as Hannibal broke the skin of his neck. The taste of Will’s blood had him aching, so much so that when he reached for himself to speed up both his and Will’s hands made him spill with a sigh. He clutched him and kissed Will’s cheek.

“I’m sorry,” Will whimpered, “I….”

“Shh….that was…exquisite.”

“I messed it up.”

“No, Will, you didn’t,” he assured him, “You were perfect.”

Will laid on top of him, still shaking, and Hannibal just held him there the breeze and obvious wildlife not a thought to either of them.

“I love you, Hannibal.”

He sighed. “I will not let you go, Mazasis,” he promised, “Not now, not ever.”

Will let out a sob, clutching harder, and he smiled.

“You don’t…”

“I mean every word.”

He wiped Will’s tears away when he lifted his head to look down at him. “We’re sitting on a stone stair that was once…”

“A murder scene.”

Will sniffled as he suddenly laughed. “Yes.”

“And we’re covered in our own juices, and…we’ve made a new memory that I will not ever forget.”

He leaned down and kissed Hannibal softly. “Neither will I.”

Hannibal pulled Will down on top of him then, not caring if they stayed all night, and he sighed as they looked up at the sky.

“It’s beautiful,” Will said, “I…I don’t think I’ve ever seen things so clear.”

He kissed Will’s cheek and felt his chest ache.

“I forgive you.”

Will didn’t say anything for what felt like an eternity.

“Will?”

He was shaking, Hannibal could feel that much, and yet he didn’t move.

“Will, please say something.”

Will didn’t say a word, shaking more now, and Hannibal’s fear he’d given his forgiveness so abruptly at a strange time made him turn Will onto his back to stare down at him. He froze when he saw Will smiling, tears streaming down his cheeks, and smiled back.

“Meile…”

He kissed him again, making Will whimper, and when he pulled back, he pressed a kiss to his forehead again.

“I forgive you, Mazasis.”

Will let out a sob, throwing his arms around him, and Hannibal held him tightly back.

The sound of the wildlife was the only thing he could hear other than Will’s whispered words he repeated over and over again.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you…”

He kissed his cheek and sighed.

“No, Will,” he said, breathing in his scent now so familiar, “Thank you.”

Chapter 9

Will had never wanted Hannibal to have to do anything like this but here they were.

The council had argued for days with him about "vetting" Hannibal for the interview, making sure he "said the right things", but Will insisted that he'd never force his husband not to be himself. Hannibal wasn't meant to be caged even in his words and Will would never want him to be.

The interview with Tonight Now had been scheduled since Will's call days before, and though at the moment they were rehearsing before the actual taping he still felt more nervous for himself than anything else.

He knew while he wanted Hannibal to be himself and not hide anything, he'd have to hide a lot.

Will sighed as he leaned against Hannibal on the couch, awaiting Cherie herself, and Hannibal kissed his temple.

"Are you alright, Mazasis?"

"I'm just…I'm nervous, Meile."

"There's nothing to be nervous about, Will, I assure you. Things will go just fine."

"I just don't want to…say the wrong thing."

Hannibal pressed his lips to Will's ear. "All you have to do is say all but *one* thing, and you'll be fine. If I think you're close to breaking, I will cause a diversion to put the notice on myself."

Will frowned at him. “I don’t want…”

“Hello!”

The loud, booming voice of Cherie Maspeth, longtime host of “Tonight Now” was familiar to Will immediately and he sat up with a blush as she came into the room. It was a private room, not yet on set, but still Will felt like eyes were all over him.

“Hello,” he said, as Hannibal put an arm around his shoulder.

Cherie sat in a chair across from them, her bright pink dress downright garish compared to their dark suits.

“It’s an honor to meet you King Will,” she said, then looked at Hannibal, “And you…Dr. Lecter.”

Will frowned when she looked Hannibal over with more than polite appreciation.

“Thank you,” Hannibal said, as Will glared, the stars in her eyes obvious.

“I…I won’t say a lot of us aren’t a little nervous about the interview,” she laughed, “I mean, the *King* and *The Ripper* together on *our show* ? It’s gonna be ratings gold.”

“Yes, well…”

Cherie laughed again. “You know, I’ve read a lot of your articles, Doctor. Your hold on the psyche is…”

Will gripped Hannibal's hand in his hard, and Hannibal looked at him.

"We're not here to talk about me, are we?" Hannibal asked, "We're here about *us* ."

She paused. "Well, yes, I suppose. I just…"

"Are we gonna talk about the interview or not," Will snapped, his lip curled, "I thought you were in here to give us the questions, though I know my people have given *you* a set already."

"Yes, well…" she said, frowning, "I was just coming in to assure you we'll be treating the interview with the utmost respect. It's not everyday you get an opportunity to interview…" she looked at Will, "Royalty."

"Well, are we going to rehearse or…."

"I thought it best to go off the cuff," she said, smiling again though it didn't quite reach her eyes, "To get honest reactions. We'd tape, of course, but if there are problems we can always edit in post."

Will's eyes narrowed.

It felt deliberate, calculated, and suspicious for there to be no beforehand questions. He wanted to argue, so show force, and yet he worried it would look bad on them both if he did.

"I guess that's…that's fine. As long as we have editorial rights to delete the footage."

"Your people demanded it, yes, King Will."

Will looked at Hannibal. “Well, then I guess we can get this over with.”

Hannibal pressed a kiss to his cheek, lips just near his ear. “She’s up to something.”

Will nodded.

“We don’t have to do this.”

He pulled back and smiled, touching Hannibal’s cheek. “Do you see how he can’t get enough of me? I’ve never felt such love.”

Cherie sighed. “Yes, well let’s carry on.”

Will smirked as she stood, and Hannibal kept his hands on him as they left the room. The ‘set’ was filled with a skeleton crew, only five, and yet Will still felt those same unsettling eyes on him as they headed for a similar couch. Tobias and Frances were off to their left, looking out of place.

“I think it would be best if Dr. Lecter sat on the left,” Cherie said, as Will frowned, “It’s better for lighting.”

He glared when he realized that her seat was closest to Hannibal’s, and again the anger started to rise.

“I think I’d prefer the King to get the best lighting,” Hannibal said, sitting beside Will on the right, “I’ve always loved being in the dark, and feel much more comfortable.”

Will smiled as he leaned in for a kiss, and Hannibal kissed back softly his eyes on only Will.

“You look best in the shadows,” he said, “But you always look best.”

“Will…”

Cherie coughed. “I guess that’s fine. Are we ready?” she asked, looking back at the crew.

“Ready!” someone called out, “Three two…”

A bright light hit above them, and Will tried not to react as Hannibal held him a little tighter.

“We’re here with King William and his controversial consort, Dr. Hannibal Lecter,” she said, smiling at Hannibal, “This is a monumental first interview for the both of you correct?”

“Correct,” they both said.

“How are you dealing with all the…upset?”

“We’re just happy to be together,” Will said, looking at Hannibal, “We hardly have paid it much attention.”

Hannibal smiled. “I’ve just been happy to get Will back in my life.”

Cherie sighed. “That’s…that’s very romantic, though some would say romancing a serial killer…”

Will turned sharply. “He is my *husband* ,” he said, “He’s killed people, yes, but…you don’t know him and you don’t know his past. You don’t…you don’t know what he’s been through to be who he is now or…”

“What we’ve *both* been through,” Hannibal said with a sigh, “Will has seen much pain in his life as well, much more than I have.”

He looked at him with tears in his eyes. “That’s…”

“You lost your parents recently,” Cherie said, making Will look at her, “What a tragedy.”

“Yes,” he said, looking down as he felt Hannibal squeeze his hand, “It…it was a shock.”

“It brought Hannibal to you,” she said, “And made it possible for you to break your engagement to Mason Verger.”

Will looked up in surprise.

Mason had been the number one thing they’d asked not to be questioned about.

Cherie leaned in further as Will felt his heart beat wildly in his chest. “Mr. Verger has gone on record saying he was devastated by the loss of you, that his heart was broken when…”

“If you do not desist in this line of questioning, you will regret it,” Hannibal growled, his hand tightening in Will’s.

She turned sharply. “I’m merely just…”

“We requested Verger be off the table,” Hannibal snarled, as Will stared at him, “Your insistence to add him in means you have reason, and you no doubt have much. What game are you playing?”

“I assure you, Dr. Lecter…”

“STOP CALLING HIM THAT!” Will yelled, so angry he could scream, “He’s…he’s…he’s not a doctor anymore and you…YOU KEEP LOOKING AT HIM! STOP! JUST…”

Cherie’s eyes were wide. “I apologize, King Will, it’s just respectful to…”

Will could hardly see through his tears. “I know you want him,” he said, “I saw you looking. He’s mine, he’s…he’s MINE! I’ll…”

Hannibal’s voice cut through his next thought.

“Did you know the previous King and Queen kept Will from me by force?”

Cherie looked at him sharply.

“What? That’s…”

“Hannibal,” Will said, “You…”

He looked at Will, his eyes tearing up as he spoke. “That they refused to let him write me, that they let him have my letters pouring out my soul for comfort, and would not let him respond? That they tried to cut off our connection at the start, and yet…the moments we’ve spent together over the last weeks have done nothing but reconnect us so deeply I cannot imagine my life without him now?”

Will whimpered. “Meile…”

Cherie was quiet as Hannibal touched his cheek. “That his tears make my heart break? That…that I ache for him to smile? That…that I feel as if we’re…meant to be?”

He kissed him then, unable to stop himself, and Hannibal deepened their kiss grabbing the back of Will’s head as his fingers brushed through Will’s hair. Will ached, desperately, and nearly forgot they were alone until Cherie sniffled.

“That’s…that’s beautiful, D…Mr. Lecter,” she said, making Will pull away to see her eyes were teary, “I cannot imagine the pain you were both in being kept apart. All of Newcliff should be so lucky in love.”

“Yes,” Hannibal said, kissing Will’s hand, “They should be. I would do anything for my King, and I believe he for me.”

I have, Will wanted to say, but instead just nodded.

“Well, let’s take a break. CUT!”

She went to stand but Hannibal stood instead walking over to her with a readiness Will was shocked to see.

“I must insist that you explain yourself,” he said, looking down at her, “Who paid you?”

Cherie froze. “Paid? I get paid by the Newcliff Television Cor…”

“ *Who paid you* ?” he asked again, “Was it Mason himself? He’d love to see Will’s reaction to being questioned about him, I’m sure.”

Her eyes filled with tears. “Mr. Lecter, I’m not sure what you’re implying. I…I’m not paid by anyone.”

He put his hands on hers where they sat on the arms of the chair and several things happened at once. Two guards from the station ran to her defense, shouting, and Will's own guards did the same, blocking their path.

"STOP!" Will yelled, tears falling down his face as he walked over to her, "Tell Mason I couldn't give a shit about him now that I'm free. Tell him that I'm not afraid of him, that… that…"

"Will…"

Will turned again sharply. "EVERY SINGLE PERSON HERE HAS SIGNED THE NDA AND NOT SPEAK OF ANYTHING THAT HAS TRANSPIRED! IT WILL BE KNOWN IF YOU DO, AND I WILL NOT HAVE MERCY ON YOU OR YOUR FAMILY!"

The crew froze.

He walked over to sit down again, and folded his hands as he wiped his face.

"After the break we will begin again," he said, his voice no longer shaking, "And you will stick to the script given, and the questions that are allowed. You can use the footage before the end with Hannibal speaking about my parents, but nothing else. Understood?"

A tear ran down Cherie's cheek.

"How would you even know if we kept the…"

"I have people already in the camera room," he said, "By now they've seized everything, and if you say no you'll be replaced. I'm the *King* , Cherie, but I am not my father. I will not tolerate this, not any of it."

Hannibal stepped back and came to sit at the side Cherie had first asked for, careful to be close to her, and where before she'd seemed appreciative of him now her eyes shone with underlying fear.

"I'm sorry," she said, "I…I only did what I was asked. It won't happen again."

Will laid his head on Hannibal's shoulder as he smiled.

"I know."

The interview went off without a hitch, the questions saccharinely sweet, and when they left Will was so eager to get Hannibal alone he barely got in the limousine the council had insisted on before he was pawing at his clothes. Hannibal held him down, panting as Will reached for his belt, and the window between them and the guards closed just as Will took him in hand. He stroked him in a brutal pace, groaning as Hannibal reached for him in return, and before long they were both half naked grinding together as their moans echoed around them. He shivered as Hannibal bit along his neck, sucking hard, and when he came it was with a sob while he stopped his stroking to lavish Hannibal's cock with his tongue.

"Will…we don't…"

"I want to, I want to, I…"

Hannibal reached for his hair, slowly panting in need as he arched up to meet Will's mouth. He moaned, tears in his eyes, as they stared at each other, and then moved more making Will suddenly sob.

He tried to keep going, he did, and yet the sudden memories had him gagging till Hannibal pushed him off.

"Will, stop."

Will let out a sob, fighting as Hannibal pulled him into his lap, and the car moved for the first time. He buried his face into Hannibal's neck, whimpering through his sudden tears, and couldn't stop shaking.

"I'm sorry, I'm…"

"There's nothing wrong with you," he whispered, running fingers through Will's hair, "Shh…"

He didn't know how long he cried, and yet the tears didn't even stop when they arrived back home. The guards didn't come to collect them, and they just laid on the seat as Hannibal held him.

"I hate him," Will whispered, "I…I hate what he's made me."

"Will…"

"If I wasn't so scared, I'd beg you to kill him. I'd…I'd send you now I…I'd…"

Hannibal pulled back to share down into his eyes. "I know."

"Meile, I just want to make you happy. I just…I just want you to love me."

Hannibal frowned.

"I often wonder if I can love," he said, "I…I've felt such deep emotions for you, that grow by the day, and yet I…"

“You can,” Will said, kissing him, “You…you can. You’re not broken, you…you’re so…you can.”

“Will…”

He hugged him then, and Hannibal kissed his cheek as they both sighed.

“I wanted to kill her,” Will said, “I…I *will* kill her if it gets out. I’ll go there myself and put a knife in her neck.”

Hannibal shuddered. “Mazasis, you…you’re making it difficult to curb my desire for you.”

He laughed through his tears, and reached down to feel Hannibal growing hard again.

“Who says you have to?”

Hannibal lifted his head, eyes filled with such deep emotion Will could hardly imagine how he’d think he couldn’t love. He may not feel that way for Will, but the depth of his feeling was obvious even without words.

“Will…”

He captured his cock, moving his hand slowly, and Hannibal moaned.

“Seeing you there, looming over her,” he sighed, “I…I could imagine so many people seeing the same thing before they died. I…I could imagine you killing her, Meile, and I…fuck if I didn’t want to let you.”

Hannibal kissed him, deep bruising kisses that made Will ache, and his brutal pace quickened as every sensation built in him. He felt Hannibal shudder with every movement, his breathless sighs only making Will eager to come again, and the warmth of his ejaculate as it coated Will's fingers had him moaning.

He pulled his hand back as fast as he broke their kiss, eager to taste, and they locked eyes as Will cleaned every speck off like a starving man. Hannibal pressed their foreheads together, panting still, and Will had tears in his eyes as he smiled.

"You make me want to be a different man," Hannibal said, "A man who…"

"I'd never want a different man, Meile," Will sighed, "I…I only want you as you are, and always will."

Hannibal closed his eyes as Will touched his cheek.

"I love you."

Will froze.

"What?"

He opened his eyes and looked at Will. "I love you, Will."

Will shook his head. 'You don't…you don't have to say that, Meile," he said, trying to pull back, "You…I don't need you to…"

Hannibal kept him still. "If there was ever a being more deserving of my love and loyalty, it is you. I loved you then, so many years ago, and I…I've fallen in love with you once more. I love you, Mazasis. I do."

Will could hardly see through his tears. “You said you didn’t know if you could love,” he whispered, “If you…you were capable of it.”

Hannibal smiled.

“And you told me I was, that this feeling I have is not just admiration or affection. It’s love. I would burn down the world for you, Mazasis, and everyone in it if it meant you’d feel no fear again. I love you, Will. Truly.”

Will kissed him, laughing, and Hannibal’s weight down on him was a comfort he’d grown addicted to so soon. He felt both their tears mixing on their faces as they continued, covered in their emotions and lust.

This was love.

And no one would stand in their way.

No one.

Chapter 10

The interview aired less than a week after the taping, and it was perfect. The online buzz around “Hannibal the Cannibal” being such a loving spouse went beyond Newcliff, clips all over social media across the world, and the success of their first public appearance together made Will’s council quite happy.

Not that they seemed to care much.

Will sighed as he read the comments he got in an email from his council.

“Groundbreaking,” he laughed, “Heartwarming,” he sighed, leaning against Hannibal in their bed, “Quite moving,” he tossed his phone onto the bedside table and curled into Hannibal’s side.

“As if they don’t know how much of a shit show that all was.”

Hannibal ran fingers through his hair. “It went well, Mazasis,” he whispered, “We should be pleased.”

“Yeah, well,” Will mumbled, “I’m mad we had to do it at all *and* that bitch somehow had a connection to Mason. The whole point of all these *people* around me is to make sure there’s no leaks or connections I don’t want.”

He frowned. “Perhaps they wanted you to be upset?”

Will lifted his head. “You think?”

“Would it be a surprise?”

“Not really,” Will said, coming to look down at him, “They never wanted me to be King, not…not when I had such an….what did they call it…. *obsession.* ”

Hannibal smiled. “With me?”

Will smiled. “Who else, Meile? They wanted me to be tamed, and I never was. That could have been the punishment for getting what I wanted.”

He touched Will’s cheek. “If that’s the case,” he said, “I’d much rather see us both retaliate in some way. I don’t like the idea that they think they’ve won even temporarily.”

Will’s smile faded. “What would you have me do?”

Hannibal kissed him softly. “First,” he said, “I would ask how your plan to change Tobias as your guard is coming along.”

He sighed. “Hannibal…”

“Will,” Hannibal said, “He’s compromised.”

“I know that.”

“And yet he still stands outside our door.”

He closed his eyes. “I’ve looked at the others but I just don’t trust them.”

“And yet you trust him?”

Tears stung Will's eyes as he glared at Hannibal. "I trust *you* ," he said, "No one else. Perhaps Francis, but no one else."

"Then perhaps you need only one guard."

"It's too dangerous for me to only have *one* guard, Meile."

Hannibal kissed him softly and Will opened his eyes as Hannibal looked at him with a frown.

"You don't think I can protect you?"

Will smiled. "You can't protect me from everyone, Hannibal, and if you're so busy protecting me who's going to protect you?"

He touched Will's cheek. "I suppose that would make things difficult."

Will climbed up into his lap, and put his arms around him as he smiled. "We'll figure it out."

Hannibal pressed their foreheads together and Will closed his eyes as Hannibal ran a finger down under his chin.

"Are we going to keep ourselves locked up here forever then? Just us two?"

Will frowned as he opened his eyes. "What do you mean?"

“I mean,” he said, frowning, “You are a *King* , Will. Kings don’t hide. I may not be royalty…”

“You *are* ,” Will interrupted, his lip curling, “You *are* my husband, Meile. You’re…what do they call it…”

“A consort?”

Will blushed. “That’s an old fashioned term.”

“Perhaps, but…I cannot be a King and I am yours. It wouldn’t bother me to be labeled your royal consort.”

He could see when the desire came to Will’s eyes, and welcomed it greatly. The more time they spent together the more comfortable Will became with being intimate, and he would never push but he craved him so that it was difficult to not want to go further. Hannibal had spent years in prison, touch starved for more than passing brushes of skin, and Will wanted to give but fought so much trauma he could not take.

Will licked his lips as he smiled. “You wouldn’t?”

He smiled back and pressed his nose to Will’s neck breathing in his familiar scent. “Not at all, Mazasis. I am, as always, at your mercy.”

Will shivered. “Meile…”

“Will, tell me what you want.”

“You,” Will whispered, “I want you.”

“You have me, Will, always, but I will not take from you something you’re not ready to give.”

Will slumped forward as tears wet Hannibal’s neck.

“I hate that I’m crying again. I’m nearly thirty five,” Will whispered, “I shouldn’t be so quick to cry like a child.”

“Will…”

He lifted his head, eyes wet, and Hannibal ached to see him.

“He feels like a monster hiding in the dark,” he said, his voice shaking, “Like…if we keep pushing, he’ll come out and snatch me back with him.”

Hannibal grabbed him hard, pulling Will in against him as he all but growled.

“You are *mine* , Will. If he even *dares* to breathe in your general direction , I will not hesitate to kill him despite your request. You are mine, and I am yours. No one will separate us again.”

Will shook his head. “Meile..”

Hannibal laid him down on the bed and pressed his lips to Will’s softly, making him whimper. He began to undo his shirt buttons, feeling Will’s body shudder with each breath he took, and he broke their kiss to lick down his neck as Will moaned.

“If I have to mark you,” he said, biting as Will let out a cry, “I will do so…all over your body.”

“Hannibal, I…I…” Will panted, grabbing his hair, “Oh god…”

He continued, undoing every button, and stopped to flick his tongue across each of Will’s nipples as he let out a guttural cry that had Hannibal’s cock already rock hard press further against his pants.

“You’re so eager for me, Will,” he praised, reaching for Will’s pants, “So good for me.”

Will gripped the bedsheets and Hannibal looked up to see how undone he was. His cheeks were flushed, eyes heavy with desire, and lips swollen from biting.

“I love you, Hannibal,” he sighed, letting go to touch his head, “I love you.”

“I love you, Will,” Hannibal whispered, undoing his pants as Will shivered, “I will never hurt you, you know that yes?”

Will nodded as tears filled his eyes. “Yes.”

“May I taste you?”

He let out a long breath as a tear fell down his cheek. “Yes, but…”

“No but,” Hannibal said, “Yes or no. If you want to stop, I will stop immediately. I know what you need, and your…your fears. Yes or no?”

Will nodded. “Yes.”

Hannibal kissed just above his waist, biting to cover any scars left behind, making him whimper, and opened Will’s legs before he peeled down his briefs. He was hard already, cock

weeping from the strain, and Hannibal had never seen anything more mouth watering.

"Every part of you is beautiful," he said, reaching for Will's hardness as he let out a moan, "I've never seen a more beautiful perfect person."

"Meile…please…"

He licked, staring up at Will, and when Will closed his eyes Hannibal stopped.

"Will, look at me."

"I can't."

"Will…"

Will let out a sob, and Hannibal stopped to come up to his face, laying down beside him as he wiped the tears from his cheek. "I can't look, because…if I look…I'll start to think about *him* and then I'll…I'll stop thinking about you. If I think about you with my eyes closed, like I… like I used to…then I can…"

Tears filled Hannibal's eyes as he put both hands on Will's cheeks. "Will, open your eyes."

He opened his eyes, the pain there making Hannibal's chest ache, and he kissed him deeply as Will let out another sob. He pulled back, kissing the tears from his cheeks, and hugged Will to him.

"We do not have to do more."

"I'm sorry," Will whimpered, "I just…"

Hannibal kissed his cheek. “Do not apologize to me, Will. Please.”

“We can…you can fuck me,” Will panted, shaking more, “He never…”

“Will, *no* .”

He felt Will tense in his arms. “You don’t want me?”

Hannibal pulled back and sighed, touching his face as he kissed him again. “I have never wanted anyone more.”

“But…”

“Perhaps,” he said, his voice shaking, “We need to rethink this.”

Will’s eyes widened. “What do you mean? You don’t…you don’t want to…”

“I never said that, Will,” he sighed, pulling Will up as he held him close, “I merely…you know I was a psychiatrist before I was…found out to be a killer.”

“Yes.”

“I would not ever think to do this, it’s against…well…I don’t have a license anymore I suppose.”

“Hannibal, are you suggesting you be my therapist?”

Hannibal frowned. “You’ve only spoken about this with me, Will. Yes?”

“Yes.”

“No one else knows but…him?”

Tears fell down Will’s face. “Yes.”

“And you hid it for years, held in this pain. You’ve told me some, and I know…I know there’s more.”

“I won’t do that to you,” Will said, pulling back as he shook his head, “I…I won’t. You’d…I don’t want you to…”

“You think I would see you differently, Will? I know you fought that monster and won. He does not have you at his mercy anymore. You’re so strong, and he’s keeping this from you.”

Will got off the bed, his anger obvious, and Hannibal did not stop him as he fixed his clothes.

“So you want sex so bad that you’re willing to have me air out every single thing he’s done to me so I can *what* ? Get over it?”

“Will, that’s not what I said.”

Will glared at him. “I know what you said, Meile. You’ve been so patient with me, and now suddenly you’re telling me to just trauma dump on my husband like it’ll change anything? You know it won’t.”

“I know, but…I want to help you, Will. I don’t know any other way.”

He shook his head. “We don’t have to have sex,” he said, walking around the bed, “Or even touch. It’s fine. We’ll just have a loveless…”

Hannibal growled, sliding off the bed as he blocked Will from leaving. He grabbed him hard, both hands on Will’s face, and glared at him.

“Even if we *never* made love, Will. This would NEVER be a loveless marriage. You know that. Do not think to dismiss the feelings that have grown in such a short time because you’re upset with me. Do *not* .”

Will’s lip suddenly started to quiver, and tears filled his eyes again. “I hate this, Meile. I just hate it.”

“I know, Will,” he sighed, pulling him into his arms tightly, “I know.”

He shivered as Will kissed his cheek. “I love you.”

“I know you do, Will. I love you just as fervently.”

Will sniffled and sighed, laying his head on Hannibal’s shoulder.

“Maybe,” he said, his voice so quiet it was just above a whisper, “I can think about the… therapy.”

“Will, you don’t have to do this. I…I can live without…exploring our bodies together. I just hate to see you in such pain. Your fear…is like daggers in my chest.”

“Meile…”

He pulled back and kissed him softly as Will licked his hand before he reached for his belt.

“Will…”

“Please?” he asked, “We…we’ve done it this way before.”

Hannibal smiled and reached for his open pants as Will moaned.

“Look at me the whole time, Will. Never look away.”

Will blushed, licking his lips as he nodded. “Ok.”

He took Hannibal’s cock in hand, not hard now, and yet as he moved Hannibal’s growing desire blossomed with just a simple touch. Hannibal backed them up to the bed, and Will fell onto it with a sigh, still under him as he licked his palm before he began to stroke Will’s cock as well. They did not look away, the buildup of passion ready to explode any moment as they watched every facet of sensation pass in each other’s eyes.

“You like that?” Will asked, as Hannibal moaned, the firm grip he had on him tightening.

“You can feel how much I like it, Mazasis,” he said, his voice shaking, “Can’t you?”

“Yes.”

Hannibal knew Will liked to be bitten but did not want to look away from him as he kept his slow pace though he reached up to dig his nails into Will's neck making him groan.

"Do you like that?"

"Meile…"

"I would mark you," he growled, his pace building up fast, "So everyone could see."

Will whimpered as he moved his nails down under his open shirt, down across to his chest, and he dug them in hard enough that he was sure he drew blood when Will cried out coming in his palm. Hannibal ground up, as tears filled Will's eyes, and Will did something unexpected.

He grabbed hold of his neck and did the same.

It was a brutal scratch, painful, and yet it felt like a promise. Hannibal came with a cry, spilling into Will's palm, and they kissed then tears merging as they came together. He wanted to mark him all over, brand his name in Will's skin, and the thought had him nearly succumbing a second time was Will rolled them to their sides.

He was panting as they broke their kiss, smiling, and Will laughed as he wiped his finger across Hannibal's neck, licking the obvious blood on it.

"Will…"

Hannibal growled, reaching up to do the same to Will's chest, and licked his finger as Will watched with nothing but pure love.

"See?" he asked, tears still on his cheeks, "We can still…it's not perfect but…"

He put his finger across Will's lips.

"It's perfect, Will. So perfect. Do not ever think otherwise. I want you in every way I can have you, but it's not a requirement. I love seeing you succumb any way I can."

Will kissed him then and he wrapped his arms around Will's neck pulling him in closer.

To think, just weeks ago, he never had this.

Never had Will.

Now he wasn't sure he could ever live without him.

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